MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tim Towarak, Chairman
Charles Brower
Anthony Christianson
Bud Cribley, Bureau of Land Management
Trevor Fox, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Joel Hard, National Park Service
Keith Kahklen, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Beth Pendleton, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office
Dawn Collinsworth, USDA Office of General Counsel

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CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Good morning. I'd like to call this meeting back to order.

(On record)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We are down to Section 8 on our agenda, the briefing to the Board. After that we discuss a schedule of our future subsistence Board meetings and any other business and then we adjourn. I would assume that we will be done close to noon or thereabouts today.

As is typical with every Board meeting we start every new day with a public comment period on non-agenda items so that's available for anyone that would like to address the Board on any non-agenda items.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: If there aren't any interested in the non-agenda items the next item is the public comment period on consensus agenda items. Those were all passed yesterday so that's all part of our record now.

We will then turn the rest of the meeting over to the Staff, Gene, with -- to go through the briefings of the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First off we'll start -- the first briefing this morning will be on rural/non-rural determination process and give the RAC Chairs and Board members an update. Theo, if you could introduce yourself please.

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. I'm Theo Matuskowitz, Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. And I'm the regulation specialist.

The current status on our rulemaking for the rural determination process. A little bit of background on 15 August you sent a letter to the
Secretaries with your recommendation on changes to the process of rural determinations. The Secretaries responded to you on the 24th of November and on December 12th we submitted the proposed rule to Washington for final review and publication. That proposed rule was approved on January 12th. After that the Solicitor's Office in Washington pulled the rule back and wanted to have additional review of that rule. We were notified yesterday that that review was complete and it was taken to the Secretary and she signed it yesterday. And it has been delivered by courier to the Office of the Federal Register. So the Federal Register will review the document on Monday or Tuesday of next week and it will be open for public review via the internet and the day following public review it will be published.

So we'll have the news release sent out. It's already on the agenda of all the Councils for discussion and for them to make recommendations to you in the next cycle of Council meetings.

The deadline for all comments will be April 1st. We anticipate we will need three weeks to conduct the analysis on the comments. We will have, probably two weeks for review internally and with the Staff Committee, and then we will need for you to meet and have Staff present you with the analysis from all the comments that we've received. And then it will be up to you to decide if you want to go in the direction of what the analysis points to or go in a different direction. And then, depending on your guidance, we will draft a final rule and go through the same process to get that approved and send that off to publication.

So that's basically where we stand right now.

We're looking at possibly having the final rule done by mid-to late summer, depending, of course, on your decisions and when you plan on meeting to make your decision for the final rule.

Are there any questions.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: The looming deadline is -- when is that?

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: That's 2017, May.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay. Any further questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Theo, for your report.

MR. MATUSKOWITZ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Next Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Theo. Next up we have an update on the FRMP, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. We have Stewart. Stewart, if you can introduce yourself please and proceed.

MR. COGSWELL: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. Council representatives. For the record my name is Stewart Cogswell. I'm the Fisheries Division Chief for the Office of Subsistence Management. And since this is my first Board meeting I'd just like to tell you a little bit about myself.

I have spent the last 23 years in Green Bay, Wisconsin working for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. I've been actively involved with a lot of tribal issues working with building capacity and furthering management capacity of the tribes in the Great Lakes region. I've also spent a lot of time on the stream doing a lot of stream restoration and modeling activities, prioritization models and to determine what type of projects that are more biologically beneficial and limited funding capacity. I've also been involved with a lot of national and regional funding programs, helped developed them and done everything from writing grants to managing the program.

So, all right, on to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. This is a funding program administered by the Office of Subsistence Management. It's a program to answer subsistence related questions. The purpose of the program is to merge traditional knowledge with current science to answer management or
So there's two types of projects.

One is status, stocks and trends. These are typical fish related projects, like stock assessment and population estimates. And there's another category called the harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge. This is anthropological or social science-type projects. And an example would be how regulations affect subsistence use.

So the size of the program. It's between 4 and $5 million on a two year cycle and we fund approximately up to 45 projects per year. We do this through cooperative agreements and we will help and assist you with those projects. And how we advertise that is through a notice of funding availability. This notice went out on, I think, December 18th, and it closes on March 11th. We sent out, I think, roughly 500 postcards and emails to all across Alaska notifying people that this funding availability is open right now, and, again, it closes on March 11th.

Being new to the Program, I'd like to do a little bit of reviewing and the office, in general, wants to review the whole process so we want to make sure that the Program -- do an internal review and make sure the Program is meeting the goals that were initially set forth. We want to look at the process itself. Is it -- how simple is it, is it easy, and just look at all the different variables that make up the Program. And we also want it to be transparent so people can see actually how the process is working.

So that's sort of the update.

I also want to, for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, I also want to just do a little plug for the Partners Program. Everyone has one of these brochures and we are able, through the Partners Program, to fund positions in the villages and out in the field. And the notice for that is going to be going out, we'll be accepting applications sometime in March.

So with that I will be available at break or after the meeting to answer any questions.
about the FRMP, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
Program or the Partners Program, so I'll be available
after the meeting.

That's all I had, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. Are
there any questions of Stewart.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you for your
presentation. The next, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, Mr. Chair. Next we
have Kuskokwim Fishery Committee update and I'll be
addressing that.

Some of you may recall that during the
most recent AFN Convention held here in Anchorage
Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Connor made the
announcement that the Federal Program would be looking
at a demonstration project to work with tribal entities
to address fisheries or salmon issues on the Kuskokwim.
The key there is that when he made the announcement he
said, administrative means. If we look at what we have
available to the Program, basically that's Section
.805, and a committee structure as established by the
Federal Subsistence Board is the only way we can
address an entity such as what was proposed.

A little background. Prior to AFN, is
that, I think you all may be aware that here, within
the state, basically from the Kuskokwim region and then
from the Yukon region there has been an interest by
tribal entities to establish inter-tribal fisheries
commissions. These have been in discussion for about
the last year and a half or so. So back to more
current times. With the direction received, or the
guidance received from the Interior, about two to two
and a half months ago I met with representatives from
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Association of Village
Council Presidents, some individuals and some of their
legal counsel and I, nor OSM nor the Federal Program
made any judgment calls about what they had proposed to
do with inter-tribal fisheries commission but spoke to
the direction we received from the Interior about
administratively working on the project. And I
presented to this group -- I walked into the room and I
expected to see four or five people there and there was
probably about 30 to 40 people and six legal counsel so it was kind of surprising. I met with them for two and a half to three hours.

So I said, here's what we may be able to provide legally. I know this is what you want. If we could try to mesh the two together and accomplish the task that we have been given about coming up with an administrative mechanism, I think the better off we'll be.

Here within the last day, day and a half or so, I believe I received an email from legal counsel, which has been retained by TCC and AVCP on what they would like to see potentially down the road. I have to review that and talk with Ken in the Solicitor's Office and see what we may be able to accommodate or not.

Has there been overall commitment to create something, yes and no. There isn't an affirm we will do this, but the direction to try to find an administrative means to address concerns of local individuals and Alaska Native organizations. We are working towards that means.

So what would an .805 committee look like. Potentially it could look like something similar to a Regional Advisory Council. It is established via a Federal Subsistence Board action, that Section .805, which says the Board can appoint committees to address specific management concerns. It could potentially have a -- how would you say -- diverse membership. If you're looking at one particular drainage, for example, the Kuskokwim, you could break it up by segments of the river, you know, lower, middle, upper, there's different management concerns in each section and come up with a membership that way. There's nothing cast in stone. We're still in the discussion phase. And as I mentioned there's a lot of steps that we have to take within the Program before we get to the point where we have to address the Board and see if they would endorse such a structure.

And that's where we are with the Kuskokwim fisheries committees -- potential committee.

I could try to address any questions you may have, any of the Board members, or RAC Chairs may have.
Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Gene. In general is part of the process developing the prototype that would be applicable in other parts of the state if there's a process developed.

MR. PELTOLA: That's a good question, Mr. Chair. If I go back to the announcement made at AFN by the Interior specific to the Kuskokwim. There has been interest to -- if we are successful or parallel to the upper on the Kuskokwim to have a similar effort on the Yukon, I have not addressed the Yukon per se, because we are acting -- the Program is acting upon the direction of the -- at the request of the Interior to address the Kuskokwim.

If you look at recent fisheries management history, so to speak, in the last couple years, what happens in one drainage seems to be followed by a request in another. With that being said, if something is established on the Kuskokwim, and I'm not speaking on behalf of rural residents or Alaska Native organizations, but I think one could reasonably expect that if something is committed for the Kusko, there may be requests in other areas.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay, then we'll.....

OPERATOR: There are no questions in the cue at this time.

MS. YUHAS: Thank you, Gene, th.....

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Jennifer, did you have a question.

MS. YUHAS: Thank you, Gene. Thanks for keeping us updated along the way with that.

The only question I had is I know that you don't have the mechanics worked out, but how do you see if the committee is treated as a RAC in some fashion, how does that impact, add to, or detract from
the RAC voice, if it's in the same region you would expect, you know, maybe the same voice, but how would the -- how would the me -- you know what I'm trying to ask, I think.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, that is a good question. If you look at the verbiage in .805 it says established by the Board for specific management scenario situations or concerns.

With that being said, one could address this as, if an .805 committee is established, it -- and I'm not making any commitments whatsoever, but one could envision something along the lines of a committee may be established and deal with, say, in-season management decisions, a more specific concerns. Whereas the Regional Advisory Council would still retain the -- may still retain, you know, comment about, you know, programmatic regulation aspects and other things. And anybody that knows anything about fish knows is that it's a dynamic changing world and it changes multiple times per day. With that being said is that a committee structure similar to what is established in other area, say like the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group, it may potentially serve in a similar function.

The big thing about a committee under .805 structure is that it could be FACA and APA compliant so, therefore, it would be legally utilized in an advisory capacity by the Federal Program, which some of the other quote/unquote advisory committees we have established throughout the state, where we have relied on those in an advisory capacity do not carry that FACA nor APA compliance and it becomes a challenge fort eh Program at times.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Gene. Then go on to the next project.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. And also I'll be addressing the next section, which is likely -- not likely, but is the Yukon River and Kuskokwim River update in regard to .804 requests and such.
As you recall about this time last year we received the request from the Native Village of Napaskiak to limit the Kuskokwim fishery within the conservation unit to Federally-qualified units. That set a certain process in action. We went through the summer and came up until about August -- July/August period then we had six proponents on the middle and upper Kuskokwim ask for similar action regard to the remainder of the season. If you recall the action which was taken by the Board last year at the April 17th meeting was an emergency action, which had a temporal limitation on it; that expired before the end of the fishing season.

So we ended up completing the fishing season last year, and in about August, last fall I received a phone call from a mid river village on the Kuskokwim saying we want Federal management next year like we have now. Our response was, why don't we wait until we get through the remainder of the season. Why don't we recommend that you wait and see what the run construction is for this current season, talking about last summer, look at what the forecast is, look at what the Yukon Delta Refuge Staff and Department Staff in Bethel come up with a proposed in-season strategy and if that doesn't meet your needs then come back to us with a request. We were told more or less, yes and no. We'll wait to see those but we probably won't wait as long as it will take to get to -- what the in-season management plan is. Come October I received a phone call, and this is all on the Kuskokwim, stipulating that we would have up to nine villages on the middle and upper Kuskokwim sending a request to the Federal Subsistence Board through OSM to limit the fishery to Federally-qualified users once again but instead of for chinook, for salmon, and -- because they wanted a similar management scenario this past summer. The response we had, or the Program had -- or myself, to the person I was talking to on the phone was similar to the first call I received in August. Run reconstruction, forecast, in-season plan, if it doesn't fit your needs then consider sending your request then.

To-date we have not received any requests for the Kuskokwim but we anticipate receiving those here shortly. And the reason I say shortly is that what OSM Staff accomplished last year in two and a half months I found to be a phenomenal extraordinary effort. The reason I say that is that if you recall this body back in '99/2000, limited the fishery within
the conservation unit, the Federal conservation unit on
the Kuskokwim to Federally-qualified users but we
didn't take the additional step of doing an .804
analysis which the anthropology division accomplished
last year. Back in '99/2000 this body described it
roughly as complex -- too complex and unachievable and
that was accomplished and so I think it was a
phenomenal effort. Now, with regard to -- if we get any
requests this winter for similar action during the
summer, the process would still be the same. We would
not have to do an additional .804 analysis, that's
already been accomplished. We'd still do an analysis
of the request, we make a recommendation to the Board,
and just as we did last year, we'd also make a
recommended allocation strategy with regard to
execution and management of the fishery if the Board
chose to adopt it.

On the Yukon, last summer we received a
fax from the Native Village of Marshall to limit the
fishery to Federally-qualified users, and conduct an
.804 analysis, similar to what we did several months
prior. We ended up doing what we called an
administrative deferral. We couldn't address that
request, like I mentioned before, that the anthropology
division of OSM did a remarkable job with regard to the
.804 analysis for the Kuskokwim in two and a half
months. If you look at the Yukon it's a lot larger
river, a lot more segmented with regard to Federal
lands and waters as opposed to the Kuskokwim, in
addition to you overly that with Treaty obligations.
When the request came in, I think it was May 26th of
last year, we did not have the time to address it, even
if we chose to, to get something in place before the
fish had already bypassed the village of Marshall. So
we called up Marshall, explained what the
administrative deferral was, they accepted that. It
got down to the point where I personally asked the
question, what do you really want now. At the time
they said well we have a funeral coming up, we would
like to provide some fish for our elders, so 25 to 30
fish would suffice our immediate needs right now. At
that point I called Jennifer on the phone and said
here's their immediate concern, I explained what we had
done to-date with regard to the request and I said, you
know, the State could issue a permit or we could issue
a cultural/social permit, your choice. I think they
ended up getting the fish they wanted. They're happy
with at least regard to that effort.
Now, we had information provided to us during July from an upper river village that they wanted to do the exact same thing, so we conveyed the message back that with regard to the .804 had not been completed for the Yukon, more complex, Treaty obligations, we couldn't pull -- even if we addressed it we couldn't pull off or accomplish all the steps required prior to the fish bypassing their village and even bypassing the border. So we did not receive an official request, you know, from an up river village.

Now, going back to a more recent occurrence.

About two months ago I was told that OSM will receive a request on behalf of the Board to limit the fisheries on the Yukon to Federally-qualified users and also there will be a request for an .804 analysis. I was told that that request will be at least a minimum of 12 communities, four from lower, four from middle, four from upper. To-date we have not received any requests on the Yukon, although we anticipate that we may receive a request shortly.

And that's my update on the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. I'd be more than happy to address any questions at this time, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MS. PENDLETON: Through the Chair.

Gene, could you just talk a little bit about some of the reconstruction and forecasting information from this past season for the Kuskokwim and the Yukon, how the runs look and what's -- looking ahead to this next season.

MR. PELTOLA: Anecdotally, the information I've been exposed to is people feel that we're going to experience a run this coming summer similar to what we had last year. I have not been exposed to the run reconstruction from the Department nor the forecast, which may be generated from the Department. From my understanding that has not been made public yet.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Have you got a comment, Jennifer.

MS. YUHAS: Folks were just kind of
looking over and it isn't finalized yet. And I know it seems like, to those of us that don't do all that big brain work, analyzing all this fish stuff, you know, why don't they have that yet, and I've asked that on various years internally too and then I've seen lots of math on a board with letters and said, okay, just keep working on it. It usually comes out in about another three or four weeks is -- is when -- you know, each year it's usually available. So it's just not ready by the time you have your Board meeting.

MR. PELTOLA: And I don't mean to make an excuse on behalf of the Department, I think -- but I know that Kevin Schaeffer who was intimately involved in that has moved to a different position so there may be some transition concerns there but there is more competent staff there to fill in behind him so.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead, Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, I apologize in advance for stating the obvious and I hope I'm not overstating the obvious but, you know, I just came from a family dinner last night with a bunch of people from Marshall and I can tell you that nobody in Marshall is happy with the current situation. You know, and I was involved in the first setting up -- the first Tier II fishery in Alaska, the only Tier II fishery in Alaska on the Nome area chum salmon and, you know, it's real similar to what's happened on the Kuskokwim last year, nobody likes that, nobody wants that.

And what we're doing is we're fumbling around, you know, not understanding the system very well, trying to find some way to get things back to the way they were, you know, I don't know anybody that wants to squeeze people out of fishing, to stop -- you know, I mean I hardly understand the system and you can't expect anybody, you know, in Marshall really to understand how to get what they want.

And so, I know you all know that but I just wanted to say that.

MR. PELTOLA: And I appreciate the sentiment, I understand it. When I meant that that
I seemed to suffice for them at the time, I guess I was remiss in making the point that for those individuals within the Native organization, the immediate concerns, those were expressed to me. I didn’t mean to infer that the whole community was happy with that. But I understand that.

I mean growing up, being born and raised in Bethel and growing up on the Kuskokwim, it was -- you see everyday how the lack of availability to fish affects the individual. One thing I can say that within OSM, our Staff, they do take that to heart. None of our decisions are made lightly. There are very serious consideration going into every decision that we make at OSM and we’re very cognizant of that sentiment out there in the villages.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further questions.

Go ahead, Jennifer.

MS. YUHAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know some of us have been dealing with this quite intricately for many months, a couple of years.

I'd just like to clarify two points on the record.

One from the State and then I'll ask Gene to clarify one because it belongs to OSM.

But for the record, what the special action did, because, you know, we've had a lot of confusion surrounding that in the public end, even with the State. The .804 -- or sorry, the special action that you folks passed last year simply precluded harvest by State users of one species for one portion of the river. And so I need to reiterate that the State did not stop managing, we did not stop all of our responsibilities by statute and regulation to care for the continuation of the fish population, we simply did not allow a harvest for one species on one portion of the river.

And then, Gene, just for the record, could you clarify again what an .804 analysis does because some people think it does something it doesn't.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, I'll address the
.804 first, if you don't mind.

The .804 analysis is an analysis required by ANILCA when -- if and when you have to allocate or potentially restrict within Federally-qualified users.

What the anthropology division did is we started off with those villages that had a positive C&T for chinook on the Kusko. From that we took a closer look, and I think that was 37 or 39 villages originally. From that we took a closer look based on the three criteria, proximity to resource, alternative resources available and direct reliance on the resource. Those are the three criteria we are able to use to differentiate if we have to restrict between Federally-qualified users. Based on that criteria the list was truncated, so to speak, cut down, limited to, however you want to define it, down to 32 villages on the Kusko. That means that they had access to the resource if there was even to be a harvest opportunity.

What did the special request address.

Well, first off, when you get a special action request, there's one that is a temporary, which is a longer term or there's an emergency, which is shorter term, and the Board chose to take the shorter term approach which put us to the middle of July.

What the action did was limit the harvest of chinook to Federally-qualified users within the Federal conservation unit boundaries which happens to be the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Conservation Unit boundaries. The up river border is, I think, is approximately 1.2 miles up stream from the confluence of Aniak Slough, Aniak River on the Kusko, from that point down there was Federal jurisdiction so to speak.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: If not, then, thank you, Gene.

The next item.
And I wanted to point out, I got a note here, when people use our microphones please get as close to the mic as possible. The people that are on line are having trouble hearing what is being said when you get too far away from your mic.

Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, Mr. Chair, next we have a Southeast Alaska RAC proposal on C&T, customary and traditional use update. Pippa, if you could introduce yourself and proceed.

MS. KENNER: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. Council Chairs. My name is Pippa Kenner. And I'm with the anthropology division at the Office of Subsistence Management. I'm going to present the status of the review of the customary and traditional use determination process. I don't have any briefing materials for you today, I'm just going to give you an oral presentation and I'll be brief.

Basically where we're at in April 2014 Mr. Bertrand Adams, Sr., who was the Chair of the Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council sent a letter to Mr. Tim Towarak requesting an analysis of the effects of possible changes to the customary and traditional use determination process. In response to the request, anthropologists from the Office of Subsistence Management will be presenting briefings to the 10 Regional Advisory Councils at their upcoming 2015 -- winter 2015 meetings and the purpose of the briefing is to better inform the Southeast Alaska Council and others of the possible effects of specific changes to the determination process.

The Southeast Alaska Council requested Staff to analyze the effect of three things.

1. Eliminating the eight factors from the customary and traditional use determination process.

2. Allowing each Regional Advisory Council to determine its own process to identify subsistence users.

3. Requiring the Board to defer to Regional Advisory Council recommendations on customary and
The briefing will be included in the meeting materials prepared for Council members and it'll be in handouts at the first.....

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Pippa, we just got a note that they're having a hard time understanding on the radio, could you get a little bit closer to your mic.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The briefing will be included in the meeting materials prepared for Council members in handouts at the first Council meetings and in the meeting books at the later Council meetings.

I just presented a brief outline of the status of the review of the customary and traditional use determination process and that's the end of my briefing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. Are there any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Pippa. Gene, the next item.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay, the next item on the agenda, Mr. Chair, under the briefing section, we have tribal consultation implementation guidelines.

Crystal, if you could introduce yourself and proceed.

MS. LEONETTI: Waqaa.

(No comments)

MS. LEONETTI: My name is Crystal Leonetti. I'm the Alaska Native Affairs Specialist for US Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm the Federal co-Chair on the tribal consultation workgroup for the Federal Subsistence Board. And, Rosemary Ahtuangaruak is maybe on the phone, Rosemary are you there.
MS. LEONETTI: I know she was on her way to Nuiqsut this morning and I'm not sure if her flight coincided with the timing of our briefings. Rosemary is the tribal co-Chair for this workgroup and was going to be co-presenting with me, but I'll cover it, and if Rosemary comes on line it'd be great if she could help, speak up.

So today we're requesting Board action to approve the two subject documents for implementation by the Federal Subsistence Management Program. They are the tribal consultation policy implementation guidelines for Federal Staff and the ANCSA Corporation consultation policy.

We have a brief summary of both documents and then two items for you to consider before you vote to finalize the documents.

The workgroup has been striving to achieve a meaningful implementation guideline for the consultation policy and an ANCSA policy for three years now. Our goal was to develop a guideline that works well for the Office of Subsistence Management and the Inter-Agency Staff and of paramount significance for tribal governments and ANCSA Corporations.

I'll start with the draft implementation guidelines. The implementation guidelines are intended to provide Federal Staff additional guidance on the Federal Subsistence Board's government to government tribal consultation policy. It is a more detailed set of instructions and procedures which Federal Staff can use to guide them through the annual process of regulation setting. It can be changed as needed, just as the policy itself is to be reviewed on an annual basis for effectiveness.

The document provides guidance on consultation meeting protocols, how to carry out consultation during the regulatory cycle and for special actions and non-regulatory issues and who is responsible for those duties and providing consultation and cultural training for Federal Staff.

The document also guides Federal Staff to keep tribal contact information up to date, track and report the consultations effectively and complete a
regular review of the policy's effectiveness.

We believe we've reached a very solid guideline due to the consideration and deliberation of many diverse perspectives adding to the value and strength of the Board's consultation policy.

Now, I'm going to move on to the Draft ANCSA Corporation consultation policy.

The Federal Subsistence Board policy on consultation with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, ANCSA Corporations, is adapted from the Department of Interior Policy on consultation with ANCSA Corporations. It includes a preamble, guiding principles and policy. Essentially it says it will follow the policy set forth by the Federal Subsistence Board government to government tribal consultation.

This draft policy has been improved upon by the workgroup with representatives from village and regional ANCSA Corporations, thereby adding to the meaning of this policy for this Board. It was originally drafted in December 2011 and has been perfected through consultations throughout the last couple of years.

A couple of items to review.

Co-Chair Rosemary Ahtuangaruak and I sent you a letter transmitting these two documents on January 2nd. In that letter we asked you to consider two items. I'll just read from the letter.

Comments from tribal leaders regarding the guideline led the workgroup to explore whether closed consultation with tribes and/or ANCSA Corporations were allowable as the Board develops regulations. The Administration Procedures Act governs the way in which agencies may propose and subsequently establish regulations.

The workgroup has identified a potential solution that would allow the Board to engage in closed-door sessions with tribes or corporations and still comply with the Act's requirements to keep the public informed and provide a
record for public review. The Act
requires rulemaking bodies, such as the
Board, to have a publicly available
record of meeting discussion that are
part of the deliberative process as
they develop regulations.

The workgroup recommends that the Board
meet the administrative record
requirement by arranging for the closed
door government to government sessions
to be transcribed if discussions are
regulatory in nature or documented
through meeting notes if the discussion
is non-regulatory in nature. The
information would become part of the
official administrative record.

A closed consultation is a viable
option for this regulatory process and
helps the agencies meet their trust
responsibility to tribal governments.

The workgroup has included language in
the guideline that allows flexibility
for the Board to engage in closed
government to government consultation
and simultaneously meet the
requirements of the Act.

The Board has also expressed concern
that RAC members have access to
relevant information through
consultation processes. An option for
the Board to consider is to invite RAC
Chairs or their designee to observe the
government to government consultation.
Once the consultation occurs and the
record of the consultation proceedings
is finalized it will be made available
to all RAC members.

And just, as you know, on Wednesday
this week, the Board did both of these things, had the
consultation just with tribes and ANCSA Corporations
and had the RAC Chairs in the audience to observe.

After a yearly review for relevance
these items currently included in the
draft guidelines may be changed as well
as other clarifying needs as the need arises.

The workgroup appreciates the Board's commitment to implementing the tribal consultation Executive Orders strengthening relationships with Alaska Native peoples and meeting its trust responsibility to Federally-recognized tribes.

And before I conclude, I just want to check and see if Rosemary is on the line.

(No comments)

MS. LEONETTI: Okay. So that's the end of my briefing.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Are there any questions of Crystal.

Go ahead, Harry.

MR. H. BROWER: Good morning, Mr. Chair, thank you. Crystal, thank you for the presentation.

I did voice a concern regarding the participation, attendance of what you stated, ANCSA Corporations or tribal members to the event that you mentioned for Wednesday. This being said, you know, the setting was early in the morning, there was only one or two attendees of some 200 other tribes that could have probably take part or written comments to what's being generated here. And I raise that as a concern.

You know when you document something of this is a process that's going to take place in this type of a setting I think there needs to be more clear definition than of how you attend or participate and include participants to this type of activity.

And that's the concern I wanted to bring back on the table for discussion, Mr. Chair.

I'm not sure how you, as the Board members, view that with just one or two members present and the other 200-some members not having a say or not
being included in the sense of the discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Brower. And there's been a lot of discussion ever since the process was started. We've looked at every possible way -- the Staff has looked at every possible way to communicate with the 225, is it, tribes throughout the State of Alaska. And, Crystal, you might want to give us an update on how you do that now days.

MS. LEONETTI: So, Orville Lind, Orville, can you raise your hand. Orville is the Native liaison for Office of Subsistence Management and he's brand new in that job. Orville and I work together on a database that has the contact information for the 229 tribes and approximately 200 corporations. It's a lot of contact information to keep up to date in real time. We think we are getting more streamlined at that and every time there is a consultation opportunity, according to the policy and the implementation guidelines, all 229 tribes are contacted through an email. But then as Orville stated during the consultation, they're getting better at contacting the tribes that may be impacted by proposals, by certain actions of the Board personally, on the phone, and actually reaching Staff members, working with the Council coordinators. So it's a big team effort and I think it is improving, as Orville stated, earlier this week. And we share that concern.

Something we hear from tribes often is they have to -- because a lot of tribes have such a small Staff, they have to pick and choose what they respond to on all the Federal requests for consultation that tribes are getting. And so if it doesn't rise to a level of high importance for the tribe, what we're hearing is they just don't have the time and the capacity to come to the consultations.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead, Harry, and then Gene.

MR. H. BROWER: So I just want to put the caution out about how you interpret that in terms of communications, you know, when you make contact by phone or email doesn't mean that's a consultation. There's got to be some discussion to the fact that
there's been interaction and the concern has been addressed in a sense. You know just checking off a box doesn't mean that you've had your consultation process. I don't think that's what we're -- that's what I'm not wanting to see as a process that's being identified to move forward. I think there needs to be proper communications in terms of how -- the levels of importance to the community or people that are concerned of these types of regulation changes are being proposed into the communities that are affecting subsistence users.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Do you have comments.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to address consultation a bit, generically, in the sense that a lot of the effort with the regard to the development of the implementation guidelines regarding to our TC policy, a lot of effort went into that. Then we have consultation with the Board, then we have consultation with the Program. I would like to speak about the consultation -- efforts of the consultation from the Programmatic end.

When we go to a Regional Advisory Council meeting we get criticized for not making an opportunity -- we're criticized for not making the opportunity available or informing people. About a little over a year, a year and a half ago, right after I arrived I talked to our Council coordinators, I talked to our Native liaison at the time and we do what we normally do by sending an email, putting it on the web page, sending, you know, and a phone call, but also I asked Staff to keep a running list, send a fax, have the TC office, the IRA office or whoever the contact is confirm that they received it and put down a name and time, such that, if we are criticized for not making it available we're not going to say, oh, by the way, Gene Peltola received this fax at 10:26 a.m., but we could say we have made the effort and then in a private discussion we could get into that if need be.

A lot of things -- actually a majority, if not all the things we do require some level of consultation.
I'll use the example of the .804 request from Napaskiak last year. That was an action that could potentially affect tribes. We did the roll call effort, so to speak, the 32 villages may be affected by a Federal action for chinook, from up stream, you know, Nikolai, Telida on down stream down to the mouth, Tunt, Kong, Kwig, Eek, we went down, we made sure that the TC, IRA, whoever the entity was had received notification. Because, unfortunately what we do, as Crystal mentioned, we have roughly approximately 130 [sic] tribes, we have 400 corps, we can't meet with everybody so unfortunately one of the most effective means we have is via teleconference. That's what we end up usually utilizing when we go through the proposal phase, when we're dealing with 10s, if not more, of proposals. Now, back to the Kuskokwim, we had a specific meeting in Bethel, a tribal consultation meeting with tribes, those that chose to participate showed up and provided us comment on the proposed action. That's the -- I mean there's a lot of effort going into to insure that if someone has a voice that they want heard, that the voice is heard. But unfortunately we can't -- if someone chooses not to comment, we can't force them to comment or participate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead, Crystal.

MS. LEONETTI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Brower, I wholeheartedly agree that a phone call or an email or a fax is not considered consultation and that, I think, is made clear through the implementation guidelines, that the contact is made to insure that tribes are aware that this proposal might affect them and that consultation is available and consultation can occur however that tribe feels is most appropriate to that tribe and to the Federal participants as well.

So I hope that meaningful dialogue occurs between the decision makers in the tribal government and in the Federal government and that's what these implementation guidelines are attempting to achieve.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: While you're still
on the seat there, Crystal, we've got a request from
Peter Demoski, he wanted to make some comments
regarding tribal consultation.

MR. DEMOSKI: Good morning, Mr.
Chairman. Thank you for allowing me.

I just want to enhance on what the RAC
Chairman from the North Slope has said previously and I
don't want to give the impression that Crystal is not
doing her job, I guess she is doing it. But I want to
state that when I came to this meeting I'm only here
because I requested from the Subsistence Board a copy
of the agenda because we didn't know anything about
this meeting until two weeks ago. Since I've been at
this meeting I've contacted the villages in our area or
had my son do it and the village chiefs in those four
villages in the Nulato area did not even know about
this meeting.

I know in the rural villages we do have
difficulty with communication sometimes, or telephone
services are out, sometimes mail gets delayed
somewhere, but something needs to be done better in the
communication cycle. I've been to this meeting before
and I am thoroughly surprised when I got here that I
was the only -- me and my son were the only
representatives from the middle Yukon River. In the
past I have seen many delegates from the Interior River
villages attend this meeting but this year I'm just
flabbergasted that no one else is here except us from
Nulato. Even Robert Walker admitted he didn't know
anything about this meeting either until Jack Reakoff
called him to sit in for him. So some sort of
communication or notification needs to be done for
improvement.

I would suggest that maybe they start
contacting villages maybe a couple months in advance of
your meeting if that is at all possible. Because I
would suggest that if people in the middle Yukon River
knew about FP15-03 I would have had a lot more villages
show up. I'm sure of that.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Demoski.
Go ahead, Mr. Walker.

MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Board. This is very true here what Mr. Demoski has to say here.

I didn't know I was going to come here until all of a sudden this Wood Bison issue and this is the first meeting I've ever been to and I never ever seen it on our bulletin board as government to government that there is a Federal Board meeting here in Anchorage. I've heard of them but I never ever knew the dates. We never knew how important this is but we knew that we did put in proposals to change some of the issues. But this, I say, like yesterday was embarrassment for Tanana Chiefs because they weren't here to speak for Holy Cross like I mentioned. I mean Tanana Chiefs, were they informed of this, I don't know, but we will find out here later when I and Pete -- we'll talk together, we will talk to the president, Mr. Joseph here when we get around to that.

Yeah, this is my first time, Mr. Chairman, and I am kind of surprised and I am very well informed on what is going on here now that I know what goes on, I can tell our other people. I did talk to our RAC members yesterday that I was here from the Western Interior.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Walker. Any further discussion.

Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yeah, this is a chronic problem with both the State and the Federal government is failure to let people know about these things.

There was an outreach program yesterday from the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council on salmon bycatch in Nome and one of the fishermen called me last night and chewed me out because he didn't know about it and, you know, I failed for not letting everybody know and I said, well, I'm not getting paid for that, you know, it's an outreach program, you would think that somebody on the Staff would take that task and I did fail in my role, I guess.

But this happens all the time. It happens all the time, you know, we just find out about these things and just like Mr. Walker said, I try to
have my finger on the pulse, you know, and I miss these
things all the time. It's really not that hard. It's
not that hard to let people know about these things but
somehow they manage to fail to do it. If I had done
that it would have been easy for me to let everybody
know, I just didn't do it.

The other point I wanted to make is,
you know, it's fine to communicate with these Staff
members in the office but they don't do their job quite
often in communicating with the users and I echo what
Mr. Brower said. The information is not trickling down
for some reason and so there's no point in spending all
this money to do outreach if the users don't hear about
it or get a chance to participate.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead Louis.

MR. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One
of the -- I just had a thought here on outreach, you
know, in Nome they have a radio station talk show. You
know, those talk shows might be another avenue that I
hadn't thought about before, it just hit me just now so
that's why I'm bringing it to the table.

But one of the other things is, ANCSA
Corporations haven't totally developed into worrying
about their actual fish and game, it's always about
enterprise. One of the things that I've tried to bring
to the table at my village corporation level at
Sitnasuak is that you own the land, there's plenty of
rivers through it, be proactive with the fish and game
management, it makes your land worth more. But that
concept is really hard to sell to people that don't
really understand it. And the tribes, they understand
it, but they're not at the table engaged. Those two --
they're all the same people, the tribe and the
corporation but the melting them together is the issue
and getting people to understand that it's all of ours
to worry about, to put that together, that's what we
need to do.

Again, the radio station, you might,
you know, Bethel, I'm sure has a talk show, I know Nome
KNOM has a talk show, there's probably one up in
Kotzebue. That might be a way to reach out. Barrow
probably has that too.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Green. Go ahead, Mr. Wallace, grab a microphone here.

MR. WALLACE: Mr. Chair. Board. Council. I didn't bring my green card this morning, Mr. Chair, but I got my green shirt on.

Go Hawks.

(Laughter)

MR. WALLACE: I see in the agenda item that there's maybe requesting action, and so I needed to make comment before maybe there was action taken.

First of all I wanted to thank Crystal and Rosemary and the workgroup that's been working for many years, like she said, you know, from developing the policy now, the guidelines.

I know Saxman was one of the Federally-recognized tribes that made comment on it and one thing we did really want was the opportunity for closed sessions if we needed to.

And I see in the letter she said we have a possible solution, I say it's a solution. And the other part of the RAC, you know, tribal governments really want RACs involvement. In Wednesday's morning session the RAC Council Chairs, or designees were on the outside circle and my opinion is they should have been on the inside circle. Because in Southeast, tribal governments and I would say specifically Saxman, and going back to 2006, we've been really pretty involved in this whole process of RAC meetings, FSB meetings and we have it on the radar, we know the cycles of your meetings, we know the cycles of the RAC meetings. And it's always been on our radar, and it's always been on our agenda right near the top each month as we go and so we're continually getting updates.

The other part of all the 229 Federally-recognized tribes, many of them are very small. Unless you are a regional tribe, like Tanana Chiefs, or Central Council, they're operating on very small budgets. With sequestration happening, the first year of that we experienced a five percent cut, I haven't seen the numbers for this fiscal year but the solution -- or maybe not a solution, but probably, you know, there was talk of, you know, the notices aren't
getting out, probably the mere fact is that they don't have funds. Just like OVS, we wouldn't be here unless we had friends like the BIA that we were granted a subsistence grant to participate in these number of years. If we didn't have that grant we probably wouldn't be making all these meetings and we would probably be calling in on the handicapped teleconference. As you all know they're experiencing issues there because of the connection problems and, you know, all those outlying 229 villages and tribes, they don't have fast acting internet so you do have a connection problem.

But if you're going to take action I do think the consideration for closed door sessions, Saxman advocated for and, you know, I advocated it for Wednesday morning. That's where it's more effective. Some tribes may not want a closed door session, but definitely Saxman did for various reasons.

One other thing I didn't see on there, maybe it's on the policy, but when we called for consultation in Saxman we sent Jack Lorrigan -- I think it was either six or 10 simple protocols to follow that the tribe met and we came up with a protocol we wanted to follow and with that I think there was some issue at FSB, I'm not sure where it really came from, whether it was Staff or who it was but they definitely had an issue and the consultation was called off basically. But if there's something in there where you would respect the protocol of the tribes, you know, when they draw it up and we certainly did that and we weren't asking for much but we met as a council.....

It sounds like I lost the connection here. Do you need to restart it. Are you there.

(Pause)

MR. WALLACE: What about this one, no, anybody else.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Did we get cut off.

REPORTER: Hold on.

MR. WALLACE: Testing one, two, we're back on. No, I'm gone again -- somebody's cutting me off purposely.
MR. WALLACE: But with that maybe I should end, but, yeah, if you're going to make action, definitely I encourage you to have that option for tribes to request closed door sessions if they can.

REPORTER: Hang on. There you go.

MR. WALLACE: I think she found the solution.

Yeah, I'd just ask you guys to consider that and make it an option for tribes if they wish to have closed doors.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: I know that our attorney had made some comments to you, I think, but we will request through Crystal, and our liaison, to get clarification from the legal department on what our restrictions are and I know there are some but I can't speak to it at this point. We'll get information to you.

MR. WALLACE: Right. One of the issues that I think you guys had was the recording part and so when we had our session in Saxman we hired a company to come in and digitally record it, then we forwarded that digitally recorded information up to Anchorage to the BIA office and then they transcribed the whole procession of those number of hours and so that's the thing about if you have a closed door session, that it's recorded, so that's what happened and that's what we did. And it's what the tribe wanted, we wanted accurate information of what was being relayed and discussed during that meeting of consultation with the US Forest Service and the BIA. And so the same thing can happen with the FSB when we request another consultation process.

In listening to Crystal read her letter to you folks, you know, she said we may have found a solution, they did find a solution.

And the other thing is, in regard to the RAC, the RAC was there to observe and in the policy document draft it says that they will participate and, yes, we definitely want RACs to participate.
A comment from yesterday is that -- and actually the last days of proceedings, I've seen throughout the years that the Board has given the RACs deference, and that was an important change from the past proceedings of the FSB Board, and so I appreciate that. And what you're really exercising your trust responsibility to Federally-recognized tribes. That's what you're charged for.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Wallace. We do have another request -- go ahead, Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN: Is there somebody on line?

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: No, just one of the public comments.

MR. GREEN: Just a comment here, or two. That man, the comment about the funding, in 1993 Sitnasuak Native Corporation stepped up to the plate when the tribe, Nome Eskimo didn't have funding, it was low on funding and we provided an avenue for people to attend during -- at that time you had to have real face to face, this teleconference wasn't a tool, wasn't a very good tool then. And it was something that hadn't been done, it surprised the Board of Fish, they made a lot of comments about it. But the fact is, is that, that's what I'm talking about, that tie between the tribes and their corporations, where the money's at and the land's at, we need to bring that home and start bringing that to the table so that the people out there that can't afford to be in these settings, we make it affordable.

So that was just my comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. We do have a request from Stanislaus Shephard. Would you please come up to the table.

MR. SHEPHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board. Members of the RAC.

Going back to the consultation. Wednesday morning after consultation was over, I called
the tribal office back in my village and they had no knowledge of the consultation. And being from -- I'm sorry Stanislaus Shephard from the lower Yukon Mountain Village. Being from the lower Yukon, the groups -- the tribal groups down there are very active in such as Federal Subsistence Board, the State Board and the RAC meetings geared for subsistence purposes. I was wondering did you actually get a hold of the tribes -- most of them, the tribes -- what time did you start your consultation.

MS. LEONETTI: Through the Chair. The consultation began at 8:30 on Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., and I'd have to ask Orville -- it went from 8:30 to 10:00 but I'd have to ask you how the tribes were contacted because I wasn't -- I didn't do that.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question.

I work closely with the regional coordinators for all 10 Councils within OSM and we are definitely developing a better process because in the previous meetings we did hear some of these concerns and what we are working together to accomplish is we do several things. The first thing is, is we try to get the faxes out -- I'm sorry, the emails. And within that email we send out to all the tribes or ANCSA Corporations, we will request, if you've got this please zap us back. If that doesn't work we'll do a fax, and we request the same thing on the fax, is if they received the fax, please let us know. If we don't get a reply from that we do a phone call. And a lot of times, what I'm finding out, is some of those -- the data listings we have are no longer current and so as we go through these we are finding out new information and we are adding those to our data list. And it's not going to be a quick fix. And my goal at this point is to get as many cards as I can out to all the tribes and the people here and also through, again, the emails and phone calls that I'll be making in the future.

But it is a process that we are working on and like I said before it's going to get better.

And one of the things I found out, as I was going to say, the names in the tribes out there, they change so what you may have on the data base is not that -- that person's not going to receive that information if it's changed over. So there's some
issues but, again, your concerns are our concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Do you want to continue Mr. Stanislaus -- Mr. Shephard.

MR. SHEPHARD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Going back to that, the majority of the tribal offices they start their business hours 9:00 to 5:00 and do you think they're going to make the effort to call in around 8:00, an hour before they start working, or would that be something to think about, at their -- at their start of business hours, or would that make any affect.

MS. LEONETTI: Through the Chair. I appreciate you bringing that forward. That's absolutely something that we should consider when setting up these consultations with tribes.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Does that conclude your comments or do you have more.

MR. SHEPHARD: Mr. Chair. Would I be able to touch on the subject of .804.....

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Sure.

MR. SHEPHARD: .....or would that be at a later time?

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: No, go ahead.

MR. SHEPHARD: Okay. Going back to the .804 request, my question would -- if I could get Gene, Jr., to step up please, thank you, you had mentioned that the lower Yukon is anybody -- is any one person qualified to send in a request for this .804 or does it have to be through the tribe or an entity?

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. The Federal process is designed to be bottom up. With that being said an individual can make a request, a corp can make a request, a TC could make a request; any entity can. You do not have to be an entity, you could be an individual.
MR. SHEPHARD: Okay, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. Are there any other questions.

MR. DEMOSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board members. I wasn't planning on speaking. I just came here to pretty much observe and gather as much information for my tribe as possible. But you guys are talking about outreach. I mean I had to come up and say something because I never knew about this meeting. I would have never known if my dad didn't tell me about it. After that first day on -- when was that, Tuesday, I called the first chief of Koyukuk, he sits on the TCC E-Board, he didn't know anything about this meeting, he didn't even know it was happening. I asked him if he -- I asked him how come he wasn't here at this meeting and he said he didn't even know about it.

But -- let's see, I wanted to touch up on that gentleman, what he said about radio stations. There's a radio station in Galena KIYU, I mean they can just contact them and at least put out word that they're having meetings and then there's Huslia, Ruby, Nulato, Koyukuk, all those villages listen to the radio station every day pretty much.

But I'm just happy to be here. I mean I've gathered a lot of information and I gained a lot of knowledge being here.

But, yeah, you guys are talking about outreach, the villages need to know. I mean I'm flabbergasted, just like my dad said, I expected to see a lot of Native village corporations here. I thought there was going to be a whole bunch of us down here but like my dad said, there's only two of us from the Western Interior. There is ways to reach out to us. I mean I'm on the internet every day at work, I check emails and I'm always on the internet checking emails. But, yeah, I just wanted to give my two cents on the outreach because I would have never known about this meeting but I'm glad I'm here though.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
MR. SMITH: Yeah, you struck a nerve.
I'm on the internet all the time too. Have you ever
looked at the Federal Subsistence Board FaceBook site?

MR. DEMOSKI: Not the FaceBook website
but the Federal Subsistence Board website, yeah, I've
been on there.

MR. SMITH: I was wondering what you
thought of them. Both of those, the website and the
FaceBook, I was wondering if you thought those served
any useful purpose.

MR. DEMOSKI: Well, the Federal
Subsistence Board website I'm on there pretty
consistently but I've never known about this meeting
just until my dad brought it up to me. I definitely
will have to check out the FaceBook web page though.
I'll do that when I get back.

MR. SMITH: I just wanted to make a
point. I think both of those sites leave a lot to be
desired and they haven't really been very easy for me
to use. And that would be one suggestion is to have
somebody work on those.

MR. DEMOSKI: Is there any more
questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you for your
comments.

MR. DEMOSKI: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Ms. Pendleton, you
had a comment.

MS. PENDLETON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
I just wanted, for the record, to express my
appreciation, I think to the team, to Crystal and
Rosemary and the various team members really for a good
job.

And I think the thing that excites me
the most about the implementation guidelines is that
it's recognized as being a living set of guidelines, I
think that's important. Because there's always room
for improvement and we're always going to learn new
ways to be more effective in our communications and our consultations.

The thing that's really stood out, I think, probably for most of us here is as we implement these guidelines, and I do think it's a good product and one that will continue to improve, but as we do that, we've heard a lot this morning about really putting some emphasis on how we reach out and connect and communicate across this giant state with all the different communities and villages and tribal entities and organizations, and so as we do that, that we --

maybe this next year, really focus on some careful monitoring of the effectiveness of that outreach and look for ways that we can improve on that. We've heard some great ideas from public service announcements on the radio to things that, I believe, that OSM is already doing with fax and letter and email and computer and website, but if we can think about some ways that we can really monitor our effectiveness of this.

And I'm also a believer that communication is two ways, and, so, you know, and I believe that there will be some efforts to really improve upon that in outreaching to folks but it takes two people to communicate, as we know, and so recognizing a responsibility of all to help get that word out, I think, is going to be really important.

I also appreciate the efforts that have been taken, as we heard from Mr. Wallace, on the importance of having that opportunity for closed consultations and the opportunity for the Federal Subsistence Board, if it's regulatory in nature, to have that information on the record through transcripts. So, I, too, appreciate those efforts that have been made and the flexibility to address that as may come on a need by need basis.

So, good job, and I just appreciate folks and the work that they've done on this.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Gene, you had comments.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I don't mean to hijack the discussion about TC, but outreach is
But in regard to the comments made, I'd just like everybody to know that OSM's effort, we did send out PSA's to 43 radio stations announcing the meeting, one television station, numerous rural newspapers, the Alaska Dispatch News, it's posted on our web page, our FaceBook page, I believe, and also we utilized emails and faxes.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any other comments. Crystal, are you -- do you have any other information for the Board.

MS. LEONETTI: No. Only just to echo Ms. Pendleton, thank you for your comments, and the workgroup members, I do want to acknowledge them.

Roy Ashenfelter was here for the last two days and was hoping to come to the table with me but had to go back to Nome today so he couldn't be here.

Rosemary was on the phone for the last two days and couldn't be here today.

John Andrew from Organized Village of Kwethluk.

I'm just going to read the workgroup members to acknowledge their work and their -- they really have volunteered to put lots of effort into this.

Lillian Petershore from the US Forest Service.

Jean Gamache from National Park Service.

Orville Lind, Office of Subsistence Management and his predecessor, Jack Lorrigan.

Brenda Takeshorse from the Bureau of Land Management.

Chief Gary Harrison from Chickaloon Native Village.
Bobby Andrew, Native Village of Ekwok.

Glenn Chen and Pat Petrivelli from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Gloria Stickwan from AHTNA Incorporated.

Charles Ekak from Olgoonik Corporation of Wainwright.

Mickey Stickman from Nulato Tribal Council.

Cliff Adams from Beaver Gwich'in Corporation.

Eddy Rexford from Native Village of Kaktovik.

I want to acknowledge all of them for years, really, for meeting after meeting and coming together and trying to reconcile all the comments that come in from tribes, corporations, and working with all the Federal Staff that have been involved. So thank you.

That concludes my presentation briefing.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Crystal. And we appreciate all the work that you're doing with Rosemary and coordinating all of that with Orville and everyone else.

MR. CRIBLEY: Mr. Chairman.....

OPERATOR: Excuse me.

MR. CRIBLEY: .....oh, sorry.

OPERATOR: Excuse me, sorry, we do have two comments over the phone, would you like to take the comments over the phone.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Yes, we will.

OPERATOR: Okay. Our first comment is from Darrell Vent, your line is open.
MR. VENT: Yeah, good afternoon -- or, good morning.

I just wanted to give a little bit of information, I guess, on communication there. I know there's a Facebook site for Federal Subsistence Board and I'm on the Western Interior Regional Board and Melinda Hernandez is our coordinator so I get most of my information through her. And I know a lot of these villages out here find it real hard to attend these meetings or consultation. And a lot of times, you know, the bigger villages with more money or, you know, people that have more input tend to go to these meetings more, so a lot of the little villages are left out like, for example, maybe Hughes, probably Alatna. I know Allakaket has a little bit of representation. Nulato, I see they're down there. And a lot of times it's just that, you know, our communication level is there but we just don't have the money or the funds to attend these meetings.

So that's my input.

And also we have, what you call, conventions, I guess they do in other areas too, but I know our convention starts at TCC and a lot of the information could be, you know, kind of given around those times of the year like in March, you know, tell about the Federal Subsistence Board for consultation. That's -- you know, that's pretty vital to our people out here, consultation, because that's the only time we get to air our information out. A lot of times we're, you know, busy trying to argue for our subsistence out here and it doesn't go anywhere because we're only at an advisory capacity right now. But now that we're getting more and more involved I hope that, you know, this communication gets to the people in the villages.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you for your comments.

OPERATOR: Our next comment is from Jack Reakoff, your line is open.

MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've said this before, there's too many tribes for OSM to deal with on their own. There's the National Park Service, the Federal Wildlife Refuge systems, the BLM,
they all have subsistence coordinators and a lot of them are in the field. Each agency should be in charge of certain communities and having contact on the phone, face to face, attending tribal meetings, contacting and keeping up on who the current tribal chiefs are; that's how this information's going to get out. They need to have certain -- break it down to where everybody has responsibility for contacting the various tribes and then feed all the information, reminding the radio stations that the Federal Board meeting is meeting, this is the number to call. They need to have these area subsistence coordinators, they're all on Staff, they need to utilize those to help in the tribal consultation process.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Reakoff. I think people have made notes of your comments and we appreciate your observation from that side.

Any questions. Any further questions.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: I have a general question with regards to the proposals. As we review them, we go through them region by region, do each of the RACs receive specific copies of your particular regional proposals that we're going to be covering.

MR. LOHSE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: You do.

MR. LOHSE: The answer to that would be yes.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: I wonder if that same information could go out to the regional non-profits. The regional non-profits are coordinators for all of the tribes in the villages. Like in Kawerak's case, they take care of all the villages in the Norton Sound, including St. Lawrence Island and Elim and a couple of villages that don't belong to the regional corporation. But if they knew specifically that we were going to be covering proposals that affect their regions, I know they would have more interest in what the Federal Subsistence Board is doing. So if we can
make sure that they know about that, I think it would be a good way to communicate. They, in turn, can individually connect with their local tribes.

Anything else further.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: If not, thank you very much Crystal.....

MR. C. BROWER: Wait, wait, I have a question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair, thank you.

Crystal, I just have a question, this is an action item and in your request you stated that you have two issues to our attention. One being whether consultation with tribes and ANCSA Corporations may occur with the public attendance, I have some problems with that. Are those going to be introduced into the policy or what -- I don't have a problem with the second, providing information gained during consultation process to Regional Council. If this action item is to be voted on, are these two recommendations going to be inserted into the policy or what? Because earlier, as stated, there is always mixed feelings between the tribal and ANCSA Corporations, they're both tribal members, they're both shareholders, but at the same time the entity is different. One governs the other. And I'm just curious whether your issues brought to our attention, will be incorporated into this policy.

Thank you.

MS. LEONETTI: Through the Chair. Yes. The ANCSA Corporations policy is before you today to adopt and put into motion. Although I will say we've been essentially practicing that policy since the tribal policy was adopted in 2012. ANCSA Corporations representatives have attended, though sparsely, the tribal consultations of the Federal Subsistence Board throughout the last couple of years and -- and it's been congenial and professional and so, yes, the -- the two documents that are before you, the implementation guidelines for the tribal policy and the ANCSA
consultation policy are for the Board to adopt today.

Did that -- I -- did that answer.....

MR. C. BROWER: No, I'm just trying to find out, they may occur with a public -- public meeting, the shareholders and the tribal members; is that right?

MS. LEONETTI: As far as the closed meetings, closed consultations?

MR. C. BROWER: The issues you are bringing into is whether consultation with tribes and consultation with ANCSA Corporations may occur with public attendance is what I'm trying to say.

MS. LEONETTI: Right. So -- but tribes and corporations may bring representatives that they so choose. So they can bring tribal members and shareholders with them but what we're trying to accomplish is that any member of the public doesn't come and speak on behalf of their tribe without being officially appointed by a tribal government or an ANCSA Corporations.

And I'll just use myself as an example. I'm a tribal member of Curyung in Dillingham but I don't sit on the tribal council and I'm not staff of that tribe so I can't come and speak on behalf of that tribal government. That's just as an example.

I'm not sure if I'm answering your question though.

MR. C. BROWER: I'll let it go but I have some concerns, thank you.

MS. LEONETTI: Okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Did you have a comment.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Well, I was just trying to get clarification for Charlie here. I think he's wondering if the public's going to be involved in that meeting basically, right.

MR. C. BROWER: Yeah.
MR. CHRISTIANSON: And I.....

MR. C. BROWER: You know, one or two is not a public, that's what I'm trying to get at.

Thank you.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Well, and I think, Mr. Chair, there was also some questions about that representation even as we had our consultation. Because some people sat in the circle that represented multiple tribes and some people who represented multiple tribes may or may not have been allowed in, to sit in that consultation. So I think there's still some specifics that need to be worked out.

But through this whole consultation process, I'm a strong proponent that, a lot of this has got to fall back on the tribes and how serious these issues are for them and pick the ball up and show up to the meeting or call in, and that's coming from a rural resident who works for a tribe who doesn't have enough money to send a representative here either. And if you sit in those offices and you manage the paperwork, you get about 20 to 30 consultation papers probably a month, every agency that's involved and they all look the same. So one of my recommendations was maybe you snap a fish and a deer on the front of our consultation paper so they know it means something.

(Laughter)

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Just to decipher what that consultation looks like when it comes in the door, it's about your food and it's important, and so the prioritization. Again, like what Beth says, a little bit onus has got to fall back on the people who want to consult and want to be heard and I challenge those people to get those comments in and be a part of the process because it's important and your words carry a lot of weight, whether you're an individual or a tribe, please involve yourself in the process.

Again, informing yourself is where the power is.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead, Crystal.

MS. LEONETTI: Thanks, Mr. Christianson for those comments, especially about representatives of
regional non-profits, regional consortiums. The
workgroup members that have been here in attendance
this week have discussed that because it came up on
Wednesday and that's something that we need to take up
at our next workgroup meeting and figure out how to
make that work the best, as Mr. Towarak also eloquently
suggested. So we'll be working on that too.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: I think Bud wanted
to say something like three times ago.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Bud, go ahead. Mr.
Cribley.

MR. CRIBLEY: Thank you. Well, first I
wanted to thank Crystal and Rosemary also for the work
that they have done here. I have a little bit of a
perspective of what it takes to do something like this,
particularly working with a very diverse group and it
is a challenge but you have been very successful in
what you've brought forward to the Board.

The question I've got right now is as
much process as anything. The first thing is, is trust
responsibilities is probably one of the most important
responsibilities that Federal leadership has here in
Alaska, and we take it very seriously and understand
the importance of it and understand the importance of
being successful at it because if we're not successful
at it then we're not going to be successful in our jobs
and doing what we should be doing in managing public
lands and public resources.

And that kind of leads into the
question I've got, is we haven't heard anything from
the Office of Subsistence Management, or Gene, from the
standpoint of his perspective of the policy, the
proposed process that's being laid out and what his
thoughts are or if his office has looked at this and
have comments on it and just what it's going to take to
implement this; if he has a perspective on it or
concerns or thoughts on it.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, thank you, Mr.
Chair.

Yeah, Bud, OSM had been involved over
the three year course of this effort, more so here
recently probably in the last six months. We did have some concerns that we expressed to the implementation workgroup, I think those were addressed and worked and hashed out. The way the process was designed, we appreciated the effort that Crystal and the group put into it, the Program really appreciates the effort in the sense that when we first started this we really didn't have a Native liaison in place. Then we had the position filled where he determined the best for he, his career, his family to take a different position, and now we have Orville on staff. The value of having Orville on Staff is we have a Native liaison within OSM that has over three decades of experience in this realm. We intend to utilize that experience fully and we look forward to looking upon, if the Board chooses, during the action items, to accept these guidelines, to having Orville work to implement those guidelines in executing the Federal Subsistence Board tribal consultation policy.

MR. CRIBLEY: Thank you. The second question I've got and this is for the Chairman, is just what are the next steps here. And I'm curious about the fact that the working group has submitted this submission to the Board, are we to act on this today or take it into consideration and then also -- I guess the other question is, is just, the working group itself, what's the disposition of that now that they've submitted a report to us?

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Cribley. And my intention was to leave Crystal sitting there and kind of guiding us through the process that you would like for us to go. My assumption is that -- I'm assuming that the Board approves of the proposed changes that you've got, procedures that you have, and would one motion accepting both work. We don't have a parliamentarian here, a legal parliamentarian.

MR. HARD: I so move.

(Laughter)

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: You heard the motion and the second and I assume that the motion is to approve the policies that the workgroup is proposing. Is there any discussion on that motion.
MR. CHRISTIANSON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: I guess under discussion, the second part of Mr. Cribley's question is, is where does the workgroup go from here and what capacity to continue to maintain it and we've heard on the floor it's a working, living document that's probably subject to change and I don't know if Crystal's willing to continue to either review the process and its effectiveness or keep the working group alive long enough to see if these implication guidelines work for the public and for our process; I don't know how long that is but I would assume it's probably longer than a year seeing how it took three years to put it together and there's still holes or questions, even today, regarding this guideline.

So if we do accept it, is it accepted as is subject to change or how do we amend it.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: My understanding, Crystal, is when the organization was formed that it was left open and could you comment on that.

MS. LEONETTI: Yeah, Mr. Chair. The workgroup certainly has -- all of us have exhibited tenacity and stamina in getting these documents across the finish line but I think -- I'll speak for myself and I would leave it up to the rest of the workgroup members to decide, I'm committed to seeing it through and insuring its success so I'd be willing to help continue the work of this workgroup and evaluating its effectiveness. But I would also suggest to the Board that you might consider taking a look at the membership and perhaps having a standing or ad hoc committee that the membership can adjust over time as needed.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay. We will leave it with our Staff to review the makeup of the membership of the working group.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. I've heard various discussions over the last several months with regard to the workgroup itself. One, and I don't advocate either of the two -- one, is that the workgroup is established by the Board for a specific
purpose and if the Board votes to accept the
implementation guidelines for the Federal Subsistence
Board tribal consultation policy in addition to the
policy in regard to the corporations, that that charge
has been fulfilled. If they choose to accept both of
those, those would be forwarded on to OSM for
implementation.

The second mode of speak, so to speak,
I've been exposed to, is that to maintain some capacity
of the workgroup to review on an annual basis. In the
document it says it's a living document, be reviewed
annually. That is a different option.

What I would propose is that the Board
had asked Crystal to step up in the absence of OSM
having a Native liaison, if the Board chooses to go
with the latter of maintaining the committee -- or the
implementation workgroup together, I would ask that the
Native liaison for OSM, who is involved in the day to
day tribal consultation for the Program be
significantly involved, if not, become the co-Chair of
the workgroup.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any comments from
the Board. Remember we have a motion on the floor to
accept the Staff's -- or the working group's proposal
for procedures.

MR. CRIBLEY: Mr. Chairman. I guess
listening to the two recommendations that Gene just
made, I guess when I came into this, had it in mind,
that we were kind of on the path of the first
suggestion, is the fact that the working group was put
together to make these recommendations, and that they
would hand those recommendations off to us and we would
accept and then give those over to OSM to then
implementation and it would be their responsibility for
the implementation of that. And I hate, just from a
process standpoint, to continue to have these various
different working groups kind of hanging out there, and
the obligations that that creates for them. And as
Gene said we now have a tribal consultation coordinator
on the OSM Staff that should be charged with responsib
-- he, and the coordinators, responsible for the
implementation of this, and I think, just from an
efficiency standpoint and just with everybody doing
more -- about 12 times as much time as they have to do
stuff, it'd be more efficient just to handle it that
way from my perspective.
We could go either way, or be flexible on that.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We're going to be decisive.

MR. CRIBLEY: Oh, well, that too.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: I think what we will do -- and the motion on the floor is just to accept the proposals by this working group and I assume that the process, in my mind, is that we will hand these over to the Staff and they're going to be implemented, and I think that's where the future of any other working group or the same working group is going to be selected by, or recommended by the Staff to the Board on the makeup of that group, after looking at the implementation of the procedures.

Is that fair.

(Board nods affirmatively)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further discussion on the motion.

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Question's been called for, all in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: The motion passes unanimously.

Thank you, very much, Crystal, for all the work that you've done.

MS. LEONETTI: My pleasure, thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We've been going for an hour and a half, or almost two hours, I guess, so I'm going to ask for a 15 minute recess.

(Off record)
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: I will call this meeting back to order. We had finished Item 7, tribal consultation. Our next item on the agenda is wood bison update and it looks like we have Staff up front for the update.

MR. MCKEE: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board, RAC Chair members as well. My name is Chris McKee and I'm a member of the Wood Bison Management Working group. I'm here today to give you kind of a quick overview of our management plan as it stands now.

First off I wanted to go into a little bit more detail on who makes up the Wood Bison Management Team, but it suffices to say it's made up of quite an eclectic mix of people with a pretty diverse and disparate viewpoints on a lot of issue, including tribal, Native Corporation, Federal and State entities, local community members and land owners, hunting and industry interest groups. And so it was quite a feat for us all to get together and come up with a plan that everybody could agree with and be happy with and I was actually really pleased with the way it turned out. There was a lot of frank and open discussions throughout the meeting about what everybody was looking for and I think that -- and it's an ongoing process, certainly, but I think that everybody that's participated so far has had nothing but positive to things to say about it.

The wood bison are the largest native terrestrial animal in the Western hemisphere with adult bulls weighing up to 2,000 pounds or more and they roamed Alaska for about 10,000 years but gradually disappeared from the area about one to 200 years ago. Interest in reintroducing the species to the state has been around since the early 1990s. Wood bison are currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and the ESA requires a range of protections for a listed species and its habitat. ADF&G and the Fish and Wildlife Service worked quite diligently to develop a new rule which was published in May of 2014 to designate wood bison as a non-essential experimental population under Section 10(j) of the ESA. This designation allows adoption of regulations including certain kinds of take to provide for the conservation of the species. It also gives primary management
responsibility to the Alaska Department of Fish and
Game to lead and implement the restoration effort. And
a non-essential experimental population is one that's
-- it's defined as one whose loss would not reduce the
likelihood of survival of the species in the wild.

The 10(j) rule is a good sized document
so I'm not going to go over everything in it but I just
wanted to highlight a few things in it.

So under the 10(j) rule regulated
hunting is allowed. Activities such as resource
development, hunting, trapping and recreation are also
allowed. Designation of critical habitat under the ESA
is not allowed. The animals may be removed if the
introduction effort fails or litigation changes the
legal status of the heard. Again, to repeat, the
Department of Fish and Game is the lead agency for
reintroduction of the bison management and management
of the herd will be guided by the Federal final rule,
the associated environmental assessment, the ADF&G
environmental review and this management plan that you
have there in your supplemental documents.

I also need to make clear that
obviously like most management plans, this is a living
document, it's going to evolve as we see how the
animals do once they're released.

A little bit about the meeting.

The management team has met for two
different two day sessions so far here in Anchorage
that were facilitated by Dr. Alistair Bath of Memorial
University in Newfoundland, Canada. He's worked with
quite a diverse group of people. He's worked with some
entities in the Middle East that can come together and
come to some agreements on some quite divisive issues
so his skills were really impressive and I think that
he can take a lot of credit for how smoothly and how
well the meetings went. And it was at these meetings
that the group was tasked with developing the
management plan for the species.

Key issues and obstacles were
identified along with a series of goals and I'm just
going to go -- I'm not going to, you know, quote the
whole document, I just want to go quickly over the
seven goals that we came up with and kind of go into
detail on a couple of them.
Goal No. 1 is establish a wood bison herd in the Lower Innoko Yukon River area and manage it for long-term viability. The release date at this point is for March 23rd. A lot of money has been donated by groups for this effort and I understand -- I was told a couple days ago that Lynden Transport has donated, I think, about $100,000 worth of transport for this effort so it's not cheap. If you can imagine trying to get wood bison into holding pens onto a C-130, you can imagine the challenges that are -- logistical challenges are going to be posed for this effort.

The plan is to transport between 40 and 100 wood bison to Shageluk starting in March for release into the wild. It's going to be what we refer to as a soft release. They're going to be put into a holding pen there because it does take a little bit of time, obviously, for the animals to calm down once they've been flown to an area and once they are used to the area then there will be a release into the wild.

There's close monitoring and conservative management of the herd during initial years of release. ADF&G will be conducting ongoing field surveys to monitor the herd's status. Conduct forage assessment surveys and insure that any future harvest of the herd is done at a level that does not prevent growth and expansion of the herd into others of suitable habitat.

Also to maintain separation of wood bison from plains bison, even though there's not a herd of plain bison very close, that's definitely something that we wanted to be very explicit about.

And also conduct routine disease testing to monitor health, although I should mention that these animals are certified as being disease free, that was a major part of the reintroduction effort.

Goal No. 2 is to insure adequate funding, obviously, and staffing for all phases of the wood bison management.

Goal No. 3 was to minimize conflicts between people and wood bison. There was a lot of concern that was brought up about -- between a lot of members on the team about, you know, what kind of potential conflicts there were -- could be between
people, how aggressive wood bison are compared to other
animals out there.

Goal No. 4 was to encourage cooperation
among land managers to insure reasonable standardized
access to wood bison. One of the things that we're
still going to talk about is the actual access on to
the land. Now everyone on the team has agreed to
access, what we're working out next week when we'll be
meeting is to kind of try to hammer out some of those
details, but the idea of access has already been agreed
to by the land owners that are involved in this plan.
So that's kind of the, the devil's in the detail,
certainly, but those things I have full confidence that
that'll be worked out at our next meeting.

Now the next goal that I'm going to go
into a little more detail is one that obviously has a
lot of intention and that's Goal No. 5, managing
harvest allocation to equitably benefit local
residents, non-local residents, and non-resident
hunters. Notice the word equitable, I didn't say
equal. The team agreed that equal access was not going
to be possible just given the disparate locations of
people and we wanted to make sure to distinguish
between equal access as opposed to equitable so that
everybody has a fair shot at using the resource and
whatever that might be.

So a hunting allocation system that
insures the equitable and reasonable hunting
opportunity to local communities as well as to a
broader segment of the hunting public is what was
preferred by the management team. Enforce regulations,
encourage voluntary actions, the result in no wasting
of meat. That was another very important issue brought
up, especially among local community members. Allocate
20 percent of the harvest under a State limited
registration permit to be issued in the villages of
Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross and allocate
80 percent of the harvest under a State drawing permit
hunt of which 90 percent will be reserved for
residents.

Open the first hunting season when the
size and productivity of the herd allows for a harvest
of a minimum of 20 bisons so that each of the GASH
villages will be eligible for one permit each.
Encourage all hunters, especially non-local hunters to
share clean, well-cared for meat with local
communities. Establish hunting regulations that would avoid simultaneous hunting of wood bison and moose and then delay State and Federal C&T determinations until a hunt history has been established and data are available regarding harvest and use patterns.

Goal No. 6 was to minimize the impact of wood bison on other species and the ecosystem on which they depend. One of the ways we want to do this is to insure that only certified weed free hay is used for supplemental feeding of bison. And I should also note that these animals are already feeding on certified weed free hay long before they're ever introduced in the field so it's not like we're going to feed them something different before they get out there, then they get out there and carry something in their systems, and introduce something like invasive plant species. That was a concern that was brought up by team members. So they're already feeding on this certified weed free hay and they're going to continue to do so during the time in which they are confined, during their initial introduction. Also to conduct field inspections for invasive plant species at supplemental feeding sites and to monitor wood bison interactions with their habitat and other species in the area.

And, then, finally, Goal No. 7 was to insure continued communication among all user groups and obviously the meeting of the Bison Management Team will go a long way with that.

So that's my presentation and in just a second I want to hand it off to Mr. Greg Roczicka who's a member of the YK RAC and then Robert Walker with the Western Interior RAC would like to discuss some of the more local concerns.

But what we're hoping to get out of the Board here is actually an action item from you folks to endorse the release of the bison into the areas that I've just described. That is the most time sensitive matter on our schedule because obviously, you know, it's the end of January now and we're talking about, you know, maybe another six or seven weeks until the release and so that's the most important thing that we're looking for out of the Board at this time.

So that's what I have. That's the end of my presentation. I'll turn it over to Greg unless
anybody has any questions.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We have one question.

MR. KAHKLEN: Just to clarify, the proposed release date would be May 23rd?

MR. MCKEE: Yes. March 23rd.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Just out of curiosity, what do you think's going to be our -- or maybe the other two are going to address this, but what's going to be the biggest predator for these animals?

MR. MCKEE: Well, that's also something that was brought up. It's hard to say. Wolves are a predator to plains bison in other areas but it's also been indicated that in other areas in Canada where these bison have been released, it takes, I think, the number I heard was up to between 15 and 20 years before the wolves figure out how to bring these animals down. So I don't -- nobody can really know what's going to happen, obviously, but the available data that we have and studies from other areas indicate that it does take quite a while, so we're not expecting predation to be too big of a concern, initially.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Mr. Lohse.

MR. LOHSE: Through the Chair. I've just been looking at the map that you have right here, and if I remember right, McGrath has got a fairly big plains buffalo herd at McGrath, don't they have a -- they even have a buffalo hunt in the McGrath area, am I correct on that.

MR. MCKEE: It is, yes.

MR. LOHSE: And I mean from my standpoint, and I'm just thinking of the buffalo that have been in the Copper Basin and the Chitina Valley, that really doesn't look that far apart, and is that release site fairly close to the Donlin Mine area that they're talking about. It looks like it's up above the Kuskokwim, and I'm not sure where that mine site is that they're talking about but it looks like it's
almost in that same area, is it?

MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah, the release site is on the lower portion of the Innoko right before it gets into the Yukon, those four villages are located in that point. In between is the Innoko Wildlife Refuge and Donlin Creek sits right over the drainage on the Kuskokwim side over on the other side of the hills.

MR. LOHSE: So it is fairly close to the Donlin drainage.

MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah, mileage-wise, I'm not sure, Buzzy, you fly that.....

MR. PELTOLA: About 90 to 100 miles.....

MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah.

MR. PELTOLA: .....as the crow flies.

MR. ROCZICKA: I was going to say 75, so, yeah.

MR. LOHSE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MR. MCKEE: I should add that wood bison aren't necessarily a migratory animal in the sense of caribou, they certainly do the -- the herd in Delta migrates, I think it's about 30 or 40 miles between, you know, calving sites and another area so they certainly migrate but their movements aren't nearly as dramatic as say a caribou herd would be. And, again, I should add that these animals will be closely monitored. They'll be collared and there's going to be extensive monitoring of the herd upon release. So they'll be fully aware, I think, of their movements.

MR. ROCZICKA: If I could, maybe add to that, too, on that concern, it was discussed at length through the course of the meeting and bison are fairly picky on where they go, they're fairly predictable on what kind of habitat and browse that they use and there's a -- going up the Innoko and towards the Kuskokwim side where Donlin is there's a long stretch of country that really doesn't fit in where a bison
1 would really want to be to get something to eat.
2
3 CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Was that part of the
4 consideration in making -- in selecting the area where
5 they're going to be transplanted to, is the feed that
6 they would have naturally?
7
8 MR. MCKEE: Yeah, there initially -- I
9 believe there were three different sites that were
10 identified as potential areas for introduction and,
11 yes, so the potential habitat for the species obviously
12 played a big factor in where an introduction would take
13 place.
14
15 CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further
16 questions.
17
18 (No comments)
19
20 CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Then we will hear
21 from Mr. Roczicka.
22
23 MR. ROCZICKA: Quyana, Mr. Chairman.
24 Board members. Other RAC members. I just got to say
25 for the record, while I was appointed by my Chair to
26 represent the RAC for this effort, which he's kind of
27 prone to do, given my background is mainly in the
28 wildlife issues over the years.
29
30 But also our RAC has not actually met
31 to take any formal action on this yet. The first
32 meeting occurred right before our first RAC meeting and
33 we won't have another one until the end of February but
34 I have taken an opportunity through the meeting season,
35 it starts in October, within our region, to talk to
36 other RAC members as well as community members that may
37 be most affected up around the Kalskags and Russian
38 Mission, Aniak, Chuathbaluk as well as, you know, other
39 area communities down below the Kuskokwim, and the two
40 main concerns that people brought out, about the
41 aggressiveness and what the -- since we've had a few
42 occasions of muskox that wander up that way and trample
43 dog teams and those fears were pretty much put to rest
44 in that bison don't tend to follow, they tend to make
45 their own trails, they won't, as moose do, want to
46 follow established snowmachine trails. The other item,
47 of course, was what competition or negative effects
48 they might have on moose populations and they're also
49 -- those fears were very well addressed in that bison
50 and moose do utilize entirely different browse to my
understanding, as well as different habitat areas so there would not really be that conflict.

And so once I laid that out I did not have one person that I spoke to anywhere that had any major concerns about it.

So filling that in -- I don't believe there would be -- I can't, again, speak for the RAC, but in matters like this where you have a cross region issue and something that doesn't substantively affect your region, as in this case, you know, the YK Delta as compared to the Western Interior, we tend to defer to the Regional Council within the other area when it's in -- or the local villages and we want to support -- we heard -- is kind of unprecedented as far as the local land holders and the area villagers and Robert will speak more to that, of course.

And along those lines, you know, I've been -- as most of you know I've been dealing with management issues at State, Federal, tribal interaction level for pushing 30 years now and I got to tell you, I'm impressed with what has come out here. I was part of the first one -- we used to call them cooperative management plans, or co-management plans, there's different labels, but always that aspect was put in. The first one we did was in '88/89 for the Kilbuck Caribou, that took us a year and a half and monthly meetings in some cases, and also required getting the blessing up to the Assistant Secretary's level out of DC. And I haven't seen one yet that's taken under a year and the participation in this by groups that are often on polarized ends of the spectrum on so many other issues coming to agreement here, I would say is really impressive.

So I'd just encourage you guys to follow up on that. We did have the Chairman of the Game Board there. We didn't have the Chairman of the Federal Board there but I guess that's what the RACs are for to bring that forward, and I would certainly expect that if it's necessary for that, and whatever administrative hoops you guys process, you need to jump through, that there would be no problem with the YK RAC taking that action to endorse it and I would hope you -- the rest of you would, too, to the greatest extent practicable.

Thank you, sir.
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Just out of curiosity, has anybody in your region ever tasted bison?

MR. ROCZICKA: There are a few, yes, actually. A few folks that have gone up for the McGrath -- have put in for the McGrath hunt, that's one of those -- it's a drawing hunt, I think it's kind of like a once in a lifetime thing and I believe we got somebody down there that actually got two of them over the course of 15, 20 years.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: And maybe back to Chris -- I know initially there won't be any game hunting on any of this -- the wood bison herd, for awhile, but how long do you think it would take before something like that could happen?

MR. MCKEE: That was a very -- that was a common question and one that is hard to answer. Obviously, like I said, the herd is going to be closely monitored and it's just a matter of finding out how they respond to being out there and how the herd grows in response to their new habitat. So I don't want to put a timeframe on when it would be. Obviously since a lot of people are investing a lot of money they do want to see a harvest occur sooner rather than later but everybody has agreed, you know, whenever that does happen it'll be done under sustained yield principles and it's not going to happen until it's a viable option so I can't really say at this point.

One thing I'd like to add, and Greg brought it up, that the competition between moose and bison was brought up and just to say that, you know, moose are browsers and bison are grazers so they utilize a different area of vegetation and so in that respect, the competition between the two species is not expected to be an issue.

MR. LOHSE: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MR. LOHSE: Could I ask Chris one more question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Yes.

MR. LOHSE: You know I'm looking at
your Figure 2 the Alaska Wood Bison non-essential experimental population area, and the lower Innoko Yukon River release site, and then I looked at the old map as to where their location had been. Is it the intention that this is an initial release site and this whole area is available for them to spread out into in the future and we may be talking a future of 100 years or 1,000 years or whatever, the thing that I -- the only problem that I can see in that, if that's the case, is one of the things that you're trying to do and that I understood were trying to do is to, to a certain extent, maintain the wood buffalo genetics. And in that area that you have right there, you've got at least two fairly major plain buffalo herds that are currently viable, I mean that are currently maintaining themselves having a sustained yield on it and everything else, if this -- if this is a successful transplant and they start multiplying to the point where you can make different release sites or they start spreading, let's say they start spreading towards where there's already an established plains buffalo herd, would it be -- in order to prevent the mixing, would it be the intention then, since the plains buffalo are not indigenous, for a lack of a better way of putting it, to the State of Alaska, in order to protect the woods buffalo, would it be the intention then to eliminate the plains buffalo?

MR. MCKEE: No. That wasn't something that I ever remember being brought up but I wouldn't expect that, no. But, again, nobody really knows just how they're going to react to being out there, you know, whether they'll expand or not, whether it's going to be successful, how long that will be. So I wouldn't expect that to be an immediate concern anyway. And especially given, like I say, the limited range of the species I think if that was a concern that would be something that would be quite long out into the future.

MR. ROCZICKA: To follow up a little bit, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Yes.

MR. ROCZICKA: I was looking at that as far as down the road, 20, 50, 100 years, whatever, the habitat I've seen identified is going to be more conducive to them actually moving south and east possibly on to the Yukon Delta Refuge along that south side of the Portage Mountains which would put them over
into 18 has potential for harvest there but like I say I think there's a long stretch of habitat to get to the Kuskokwim side and across up into the headwaters of the Alaska Range where those plains bison currently circulate up there around by Farewell.

MR. LOHSE: Thank you. The only reason I even ask this is because we have the Copper River release site that was released on the Copper River, we have some buffalo at the head of the Chitina River. We had buffalo when I first came to the middle of that area, we had buffalo that actually traveled, we're not sure whether they traveled from the upper Chitina Valley through McCarthy to the Copper River or they traveled from the Copper River through McCarthy to the upper Chitina Valley and you're talking a good 75 miles there or maybe closer to 100. And single bulls are like single moose bulls, they may travel a long way and that would be the only reason I even brought it up.

MR. MCKEE: I would just say further that in the final rule, one of the criteria for site selection was that the release sites were located far enough from areas occupied by plain bison, that hybridization wouldn't be an issue. So that's one of the criteria for selecting this site in the first place.

MR. R. WALKER: Yes, also to add to that. You know you're looking at two mountains to cross, three rivers to cross and it is 144 air miles to McGrath from Shageluk and Grayling and Anvik so you're looking at 30 miles more to the Farewell, so you're looking at like 150 air miles, and I don't know how many miles that would be on the trail, Iditarod Trail, you know, you'd have to take a look at that. That would be a very good indicator on that.

You done Greg.

MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah.

MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Greg. Chris. Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record my name is Robert Walker, I'm with the Western Interior RAC. I'm also the second chief for our tribe in Anvik.

Being invited to this management meeting here for the management plan that we put
together by Rita St.Louis and other members of OSM has
a very device [sic] group here that I never ever
encountered all my years of being on the RAC and being
on the AC Board, I never ever had a chance to sit down
with these groups like the Outdoor Council, Anchorage
Advisory Committee, the Big Game Commercial Services
Board, Board of Game, Doyon Limited, Fairbanks Advisory
Committee, and Matanuska Valley Advisory Committee, I
mean these are things you don't ever -- you hear, but
you never sit by them and you never get a chance to
talk to these people because we're so far split and
money, cost-wise to go to their meetings, Yukon Delta
RAC, you know, I've never been there, Safari Club
International Alaska Chapter, I mean these guys are
very interested in what's going to happen to this wood
bison. We all sat there for four days, two months,
October and November. I didn't use my position as a
tribal member or a RAC member for anything, but I was
very interested to realize that they came to the Feds,
to our RAC and asked if we would like to partake in
this, working this out. I was very impressed. You
don't get to meet the Board of Game at any time, or
speak to them at any time unless you're going to a
Board of Game meeting and you got a proposal to
present. But I was very impressed that we were asked
to partake and, you know, give, the Federal Board on
what happened. But it is going to be a lengthy
process.

I believe, you know, Chris here, too,
and Rita St.Louis working this and the other
biologists, I am really very, very honored to be here
to see something that we would never see introduced
into our region probably ever again. But this could be
the first step into many other regions that this could
be done. Once this works, in the next 20 years, our
tribes are not asking for anything. When I went to the
meeting I had a resolution in my hand stating if we
were left out, the tribes, the four villages, Anvik,
Grayling, Shageluk, and Holy Cross we were going to put
this into our Federal Board as a C&T but we didn't have
to. The ANCSA Corporations of Holy Cross, which is
Deloycheet, Anvik Delo Ges, Grayling Corporation is
Hee-yea Lingde and the Shageluk Corporation is Zho-Tsa,
and these corporations are going to work with the State
and where we're going to get 20 percent of whatever the
harvest is going to be, and plus we asked for a
customary and traditional ceremonial bison also. So
these are in the works. And we are -- like I said, we
are honored, and Chris here is very honored too.
And I'm going to cut this a little short here now because everybody's going to say it's soon going to be lunchtime here and whatever.

(Laughter)

MR. R. WALKER: It seems like I'm always last when we come to conversations like this.

(Laughter)

MR. R. WALKER: Anyway is there any questions from the Board or the RACs.

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Mr. Wilde.

MR. L. WILDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier it was mentioned that you would be -- in the event that this project is a success and you're able to give out permits, you mentioned that there would be 12 permits given at the beginning of the -- depending on the success of this program, and I just wondered if there was going to be other villages that are going to be able to get those permits.

Because we have a number of people from Hooper Bay that go all the way -- do go all the way up to that area and I've got to make sure that the project isn't -- doesn't happen the same as our project with the muskoxen that we tried at one time, and I don't know if that's an ongoing process but as far as -- if I had a choice between bison and moose, we always prefer having the bison because of the meat. We do, I don't know how Greg feels about that, but I, for one, prefer bison meat as opposed to moose. And I just wanted to make sure that I got that information back for when I get back to the village, I want to be able to -- because that question is going to come up from our tribal council; when are they going to be able to get a permit, on request or -- providing that this project is a success.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. MCKEE: Through the Chair. Mr. Wilde. Well, initially, so far under the plan the permits will be handed out in the GASH communities, anybody can go in and try to get a permit at those
sites but initially the only areas in the local communities where they'll be available will be in those four GASH communities. So you could, in theory, anybody, somebody from Anchorage, in theory, could fly out to the communities and try to get a permit when they're available so they are, in theory, available to anybody but, you know, obviously we want to make them available initially in the communities that'll be most affected by the release initially. And that was a really important part of the process so that local users would feel like, you know, they had skin in the game and were going to be able to have some opportunity, a fair opportunity to be able to harvest the resource when that time becomes available.

MR. R. WALKER: Mr. Wilde. Robert Walker, again.

As of next week, the 28th of January, there's going to be a four village corporation meeting here to determine their trespassing version on to their corporate lands set under ANCSA, so, you know, then after that once that is established, once there are permits to be issued, you'll have to get a permit to travel on corporation lands, too, so there will be things down the trail that will be -- everybody's going to have to learn.

Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. And I liked your beginning comment about the diversity of the group and it brought to mind -- I've had some experiences with the Outdoor Council in my history.

But has there been -- assuming that you folks are coming here to talk to the Federal Subsistence Board makes me believe that there's going to be some consideration for a subsistence use of the bison in the future and under what regime would it be considered at this point or would it be a combination State system under State lands, and Federal -- the Federal system under Federal lands; has that even been talked about?

MR. MCKEE: You know, obviously discussions about State and Federal harvest, you know, was a very sensitive topic and something that was discussed but initially, you know, one of the reasons why we want -- that I encourage involvement and make
sure that local communities will have access to the
resource is to try to make sure that we can try to have
a holistic approach to this hunt and that everybody
will have a chance to harvest the resource if possible
rather than try to go to some State/Federal hunt
regime, that's -- I don't think that's what anybody on
the working group was necessarily wanting. We want
everybody to have a fair shot at the resource at this
point. Obviously nobody can predict what happens in
the future when the herd expands and goes into other
areas, some of which will probably be Federal land but
at this point, you know, that was one of driving forces
of the working group, to make sure that everybody will
have a fair shot at it and that we wouldn't have this
kind of partitioning of the resource.

So I don't know if that answers your
question well or not but.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
looked at that list and I just wanted to ask a question
for clarity sake.

There's a lot of different parties
involved, from the Federal aspect, the nearest
conservation units are Innoko National Wildlife Refuge
and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and on there
we had you, from our office, participate on behalf of
OSM, and then we had Ryan Molneaux (ph) from the Fish
and Wildlife Service involved in this planning team,
and so the presentation today, what is the expectation
of the planning team, is it meant to be informational
or are you looking for endorsement, acknowledgement or
what's the intent?

MR. MCKEE: Well, like I said at the
beginning and maybe I was speaking too quickly because
this point what we would really like is the Board to
take action to endorse the release of the herd. We're
not talking about the management plan at this point,
but the time sensitive nature of the release, obviously
like I said, we're talking about a release in March and
here we are at the end of January, so we'd really like
the Board to take action and endorse the initial
release of the animals.

Now, again, like I said, it's a soft
release, so we're not just flying them out there in C-
130s and opening the back of the plane and saying, run
out of there and good luck.

(Laughter)

MR. MCKEE: We're putting them in these pens, feeding them and getting them used to the area so it's a very, very careful and thought out process but it is also of a time sensitive nature at this point, just the way the scheduling of the Board meetings have come so that's really what the management team at this point is looking for out of the Federal Board, is an endorsement of the release of the animals.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Is that the end of your report.

MR. MCKEE: That's all I have. I don't know if Greg and Robert have anything more to add but I'm done.

MR. R. WALKER: No, Mr. Chair, I think I am done, too. I mean I can give you all the information I have because it's also on this pamphlet that is being passed out right here so it is for the general public, not only for the Board or the RACs.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Jennifer, did you have a comment.

MS. YUHAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jennifer Yuhas, State of Alaska.

I just wanted to note for the record and for the Board, that Rita St. Louis with the Department of Fish and Game, who is the planner, who has been working with this group is present to support the group and available for extra detailed questions and she noted a few that came up from the RAC members that she'd like to address.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: The floor is open for action then by the Board on the release of the wood bison herd.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Did you have some questions with regard to the process here?

MS. ST.LOUIS: For the record this is Rita St.Louis. I have no questions for the process. I have a couple of details that might answer a couple of questions that people had, if they're interested.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Sure.

MS. ST. LOUIS: Okay, this is very short. In terms of moose and bison living together. One of the most successful moose herds in the state is the moose herd that lives right around the Delta Bison Herd so they do interact very successfully.

With respect to wood bison, plains bison -- wood bison mixing up and so forth, those answers have not been nailed down completely. What I can tell you is in Canada, which we've drawn a lot of their information, they have these, I think they're called zero tolerant zones, or zero something zones, where if bison from any group crosses that zone they get popped off or moved or something like that. So there are mechanisms in place to prevent that if you want to.

One thing when they talked about all the people giving money to the group, that's really true and it's wonderful. I'd like to acknowledge two other groups. One is Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, they've housed these bison for years and years and every single -- they're the ones who feed them and house them and keep them healthy and without them this would never work.

And then on a -- I shouldn't say a smaller basis, I should say a different basis, Little Shageluk, you know, Post Office Box holders of 40 or something like that, every able-bodied man in that village came out to build a fence. And it gives me goosebumps that the cooperation and involvement that people have had and I really wanted to acknowledge them. It isn't just big cash money that counts, it's the individuals that count.

The other thing about Federal Subsistence Board and C&T and so forth. If you look at Goal 5 Objective 7 the team really wanted to delay any State or Federal C&T findings because one of the things
the team talked about is they don't want a straight
lottery model and they don't want -- the Seward
Peninsula muskox were cited as a model they don't want
either. The team feels that it can come up with a
better model that doesn't involve either government
right now and so that's why they put that in there.

That's all I have to say for now.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you for that
information.

Are there any further questions.

Go ahead.

MR. KAHKLEN: Usually the Federal
Subsistence Board asks -- or follows RAC
recommendations, so is there a real need for the
Federal Subsistence Board to endorse this now?

MR. MCKEE: Well, our feeling is, yes,
just because of the -- like I said the time sensitive
nature of the release and the fact that the RACs aren't
going to be meeting until, you know, very close to the
time when the release would be happening and get that
information back so that's one of our major concerns is
to have that endorsement by the Board so that everybody
knows going forward from the initial phase of the
operation that we do have support from the Federal
Board.

Obviously, like I said, the management
plan is another issue, but the initial release, since
that's the most pressing matter we want to make sure
there's support across both State and Federal
lines that this is a project that everybody wants to
see move forward. The Board of Game's going to be
meeting and they're going to have the presentation
about this plan as well, I believe, at their meeting in
February -- the middle of February so they're going to
get to see this as well. But, again, it's a time
 crunch so we are coming up on the initial release and
we want to be able to move forward with a clear path.

MR. R. WALKER: And also.....

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.
MR. R. WALKER: Oh, excuse me, Mr. Chair. The WIRAC, Western Interior Regional Advisory Council is going to meet in March 3rd and 4th in Fairbanks so, I mean, the time difference would be a little bit different here so we wouldn't have a chance to get back to you after that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair. That's one of the reasons why I asked the question earlier, because if you look at, although a management plan is not necessarily regulatory in nature, this body has not acted upon management plans traditionally without input of the RAC prior to. One of the most recent Staff thought of would be, the YK Delta Moose Management Plan, which affected areas similar to where the chosen release site is for this eventual herd, that plan was vetted through the RAC system then brought forward to the Board itself for consideration. And that's one of the reasons why I asked whether they're looking for endorsement of a management plan or action -- what they're looking at.

So with action not necessarily regulatory but we had some procedural concerns, if there was going to be -- if the Board was going to be asked to endorse the plan itself.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Greg.

MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah, through the Chair. Mr. Kahklen.

MR. KAHKLEN: Close enough.

MR. ROCZICKA: Perhaps to address that you could make a motion to that effect that pending the approval of the RACs, just given the time process and the meeting process. You guys are here and pending the approval of the two affected RACs that the Board would express its approval as well, or make a motion to defer to the RACs.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Robert, did you have another comment.

MR. R. WALKER: Yes, thank you, Mr.
Chairman. It's from Jack Reakoff, our Chairman of the Board, this issue years ago, we have a written letter of support for this program here so there is a letter to the Board of Game, the Federal Board of Game from the Western Interior RAC for their records.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Greg, did you have something else.

MR. ROCZICKA: I was going to say delegate that authority to the RACs if you have the ability to do that or give your conceptual approval at some level and then RAC deference option that you may have.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: And I think our Staff agrees that we can put the proviso -- go ahead.

MR. FOX: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to reiterate the make up of this workgroup is pretty impressive and the product they put out, I conferred with Mr. Haskett yesterday and we are supportive of the reintroduction effort. Looking at the make up of the Board, you know, we have Fish and Wildlife Service representatives, both from Innoko National Wildlife Refuge and from the regional Refuge Staff, so as far as the effort we are supportive.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: The floor is open for action.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair, just a question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Yes.

MR. C. BROWER: If this motion is to be made, is it directing the RAC that we approve of the transport of 40-100 bison as starting date in March or would it be just a straight out motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. From what I understand, they're looking for more or less
concurrency for the introduction at the selected
release site which happens to be either State lands or
corporation lands, which may fall under State purview,
so if a motion was to be entertained you could probably
structure it that the Board is in concurrence with the
wood bison introduction as proposed, and leave it at
that. And if you wanted to put a disclaimer on there
pending the concurrence of the Western and/or Yukon
Delta RACs, you could probably add that disclaimer to
it. But if you try to be too specific, it may go
beyond the intent like Board member Brower's referring
to, if we put numbers on it, it may not be exactly what
the group is looking for.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: So we could pass a
motion and end up with maybe.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: No, in answer to
your question Mr. Brower, I think if we put a provision
that we would like for the RACs to review the proposal
at their convenience, that based on that that we would
give our concurrence.

Go ahead, Mr. Walker.

MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I would recommend to the Board that if the Federal
Board would make a motion to recognize the Alaska Wood
Bison Management Plan in some sort of way that it would
indicate no numbers but it would indicated that we have
a plan here, to endorse it, to insure that this program
is going to work, not only for the four villages, but
for the other users in the area, so in that sort of a
direction, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess regarding the, you know,
management plan itself, it seems to still be in draft
form, so I would be a little reluctant to put support
to the plan itself at this point, but as far as the
reintroduction effort, I could see more support to
endorse the release.
MR. R. WALKER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think we just -- we just talked, Chris, for the release, the management plan would come later.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: With the provision that the RACs will also review it.

Mr. Cribley.

MR. CRIBLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: The floor is open.

MR. CRIBLEY: I'd like to make a motion for the Federal Subsistence Board to support the reintroduction of the wood bison at this time, and also add to that that we ask the two affected RACs to review and comment on the management plan and report back to the Board.

MR. C. BROWER: Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: You heard the motion and the second, any further discussion.

MR. C. BROWER: Just one, Mr. Chairman. I know there's some stipulations being put -- to be looked into by the RAC, but they also have a deadline of March for transport, will that alter anything.

MR. MCKEE: No.

MR. C. BROWER: No, okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Further questions.

(NO comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any further discussion.

OPERATOR: We do have a comment over the phone. Our comment is from Jack Reakoff, your line is open.
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay, if it's from Mr. Reakoff we will allow it, there's a motion on the floor but we will accept his comments.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair. My mic wasn't open when you were discussing with the -- so Western Interior has already endorsed this and voted to endorse release of wood bison in the Shageluk area when this was inception. And so the Board, passing this motion to endorse that release and then at our March meeting the Western Interior Regional Council can review the management plan, vote it up or down and then report back to you as the motion states. So I just wanted to state that for the record.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Reakoff.

Further discussion.

(No comments)

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: All those in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Motion passes unanimously.

MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you for your intensive report. It turned out very interesting.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: It reminds me of a story that when they introduced -- not to diverse -- but when the University of Alaska-Fairbanks was planning on moving their muskox herd from Fairbanks to Unalakleet, my home town, they wanted a mile square
area and of course the majority of the people in
Unalakleet started asking him what do muskox taste like
and his intention of moving the muskox to Unalakleet
was for the fur, not for the meat, and it -- in his
mind he couldn't think about eating muskox so he
decided his answer, any time anybody asked what a
muskox tasted like, he said they taste like
Presbyterians.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: With that, let's --
we've only got one more item to -- and it's almost
noon, if we could get the ETJ Staff up here we will get
an update on extraterritorial jurisdiction.

MR. OWEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
the record my name is Wayne Owen. I am the Forest
Service, Alaska Region Director of Wildlife, Fisheries
and Subsistence Programs. And before I begin my
comments about -- or my update on the extra territorial
jurisdiction process I'd like to say that the Forest
Service takes great pride in our part in promoting the
wood bison recovery through special use permits to use
to Chugach National Forest to grow wood bison, so we're
all about that bison, we're on that team.

I'll try to be brief with my comments
to the Board.

You all, I believe, have our briefing
paper on the subject. I would just like to highlight a
few particular things.

The Forest Service has been working
hand in hand with the State of Alaska to prepare a role
of regulatory proposals that are now before the Board
of Fish which will be -- decisions will be had on those
at the end of February and in early March. So for that
part of the process, the two-pronged process, we don't
have a lot of information now. But we do have a number
of updates on Forest Service actions to promote
community stability within Angoon.

One. And I'll try to go through these
quickly.

Of most interest, probably to the
Board, or at least we've heard about this most often,
is the Kanalku fish passage process that we implemented
with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game last year basically creating a pool at the entrance to the falls above Kanalku Lake. That process was very successful. You know they had to sort of jigger around with it a little bit, they blew up some rocks, they had to go in and dive and clean that out but observations of the location indicated that salmon were, in fact, making it successfully up that hazardous entry into Kanalku Lake with the addition of the extra deep plunge pool.

We couldn't have done that without the State and without the help of the Angoon field crew that the Forest Service runs with people from Angoon, you know, every year so that was a great success. We continue to monitor that, we expect there will be some fill in after the winter, stuff falling down from that. It should be easy enough to clear out.

I will point out, because questions have come to me that if, for some reason in the future, that plunge pool does not serve to sustainably provide an opportunity for the fish to climb the falls, the environment assessment that we did for that provides a second alternative, or a second step, you know, to build a containment basin around the bottom of the falls to sort of build up the water depth. You know, that would be another way to get the water deeper so the fish could have a better run at the falls.

The Forest Service recently signed the draft environmental impact statement for the Angoon airport. Public comment on that action is open until March 11th and we are having public meetings on the Angoon airport in Angoon on March 3rd and in Juneau on March 5th.

We also have moved forward on the Thayer Hydro Electric project for the community of Angoon. You know, Kootznoowoo Incorporated have acquired funding from the United States Department of Energy and from the State of Alaska to do engineering and design work and the Forest Service has issued special use permits for the project and is currently conducting geo-technical studies for the proposed area for lay out of roads and that sort of infrastructure sort of stuff.

And, finally, for us the Forest Service with assistance from our Washington office and the Alaska Regional office funded a community development
project in Angoon last year, a community garden to help
support the people of Angoon to provide for their food
needs. Most of the folks here understand how expensive
fresh vegetable matter can be in rural communities and
I've just recently seen pictures from last year of kids
harvesting vegetables and potatoes with great big
smiles on their face, sitting on wagons full of
vegetables.

So the Forest Service is feeling pretty
good about how we've been able to accelerate our
contribution to economic development in Angoon. We are
feeling very confident, you know, in our relationship
with the State is moving forward. Of course we don't
have anything to say about what the Board of Fish might
do, we will have a presence at that meeting to answer
questions and address issues as they come up to
advocate as I'm sure other interests will be.

And before I finish my testimony to you
and open for questions, I'd like to give my colleague
Jennifer Yuhas an opportunity to say what she might
want to say about the State's actions.

MS. YUHAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Jennifer Yuhas for the State of Alaska.

And as Wayne said, we have been working
very closely together over the years with this. This
process for this Board commenced three springs ago at
the end of March with your meeting with the Southeast
RAC, and we're coming up on the conclusion of that
three year process with the Board of Fish meeting
happening in Sitka from February 23rd to March 3rd,
kind of the biggest milestone in that three year
process.

So there are eight proposals before the
Board dealing with various aspects of the fishery in
Angoon, some with new gear types, some with defining
boundaries, one for community harvester, the Department
put in two proposals codifying actions for closing the
commercial fishery that have been taken by the manager,
rather than having them in regulation and we'll see
what happens at that February Board of Fish meeting.
We've met with the Southeast RAC to discuss those
proposals and participated in the -- through the Chair,
I'm not sure Mr. Bangs, was that a subcommittee that we
had formed, we had a couple breakout sessions at your
RAC meeting.
MR. BANGS: Ms. Yuhas, through the Chair, it was a workgroup.

MS. YUHAS: Workgroup. But we discussed those proposals in entirety at the Southeast RAC meeting and will continue to shephard through the process to see what happens at the Board of Fish.

Timeline.

You're getting this briefing now, we have to wait and see what happens at the Board of Fish meeting. After that the Southeast RAC will meet shortly after the Board of Fish and then we fully anticipate this Board having another meeting, probably at your determination for timeline by April/May to receive a full report of what happened at the Board of Fish, how satisfied are the people of Angoon and what is the opinion of the RAC.

With that I'm open to any further questions, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. Are there any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Just out of curiosity, I assume with your -- the pleasure of the Forest Service reflects also the local Angoon feelings, that they're satisfied with the progress that has been made between the Federal and the State organizations.

MR. OWEN: Mr. Chair. I would characterize the community of Angoon's pleasure right now as watchful.

MS. YUHAS: I would not want to speak for the community and -- and -- and do that, but I can say we've remained in contact. You know that we've -- we've made -- I don't want to call it outreach efforts because it's really more relationship building but I've remained in contact with folks in the community to say, you know, what do you think, what are you seeing, what are you hearing, what do you need before the upcoming meeting and my recent contacts have said, you know, not much yet, let's see what happens at the Board of Fish meeting but we've kept in contact and continued those relationships.
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay. I'd like to ask the RAC to keep us informed of whatever you could find out through your Regional Advisory Council meetings to their response to the ETJ process.

MR. BANGS: Yes, Mr. Chair. I plan on being there at the Board of Fish meeting prior to our meeting and then I'm sure that there will be a lengthy discussion of the outcome from the Board meeting and we'll hear from the parties involved and the progress.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. And I do have one other question. I noticed on the summary and the key points, on the very last one, the very bottom deliberation and final confidential recommendations. Is there a particular reason for it being confidential?

MR. OWEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The original recommendation as to how to proceed on the petition to the Secretaries was confidential and it's my understanding, it's our understanding that this follow up recommendation about the final resolution would also be officially confidential.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay.

MR. OWEN: I should -- if it pleases the Chair, I should also note that Kootznoowoo Incorporated has had a change in leadership over the winter since we met last. I was honored to meet Sharon Love, who is now the general manager of the corporation, a couple of weeks ago to talk to her specifically about Kootznoowoo's position or whether Kootznoowoo's position had changed and her response to me was that they were still studying their files and she asked me to provide some information and documents and stuff for that and I had -- we have not -- the Forest Service has not received an official opinion from Kootznoowoo but Ms. Love was very thoughtful and had a number of questions for me and I think they're still formulating how the new corporation structure, organizational structure feels about it.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you. Are there any further questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Thank you very much for your presentation, your update.
MR. OWEN: A pleasure. I'm sorry we
couldn't go a lot longer.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We saved the best
for the last.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: That concludes the
-- I'm sorry, go ahead -- I was going to say that
concludes the briefings to the Board. The next item on
the agenda is the schedule of future Federal
Subsistence Board meetings.

Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: And, Mr. Chair, under
this agenda item we look at the work that will need to
come before the Board here in the near future. We have
a recommendation for two different time periods, one of
those being a late June, early July sometime timeframe
this summer to address rural/nonrural issues that may
come about, in addition to another timeframe would be a
meeting -- first off we'd recommend that June/July be a
work session, and then also we need to try to get the
Board to try to address a meeting concerning wildlife
proposals in addition to any fisheries special action
requests the Program may receive and we'd recommend the
April timeframe for those of -- sorry about that, of
'16.

MR. C. BROWER: August?

MR. PELTOLA: April. So let me
summarize again, sorry about that.

A meeting to address the rural/nonrural
issues for June/July of '15.

Then a meeting to address the wildlife
proposals April of '16.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: And I assume the
meetings would be here in Anchorage.

MR. PELTOLA: That is at the will of
the Board.

MR. C. BROWER: Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead.

MR. C. BROWER: Just a question. Would it be appropriate to name a place in the village for the Federal Subsistence Board meeting or would that cost too much or is it just the wish of the Board to have it anywhere they want.

MR. PELTOLA: I'm sorry about that, I was taking notes here and talking to a Staff member, could you please repeat that Charlie -- you desire to meet elsewhere.

MR. C. BROWER: Yes.

MR. PELTOLA: Any time the Board meets there's economic considerations but if the Board chooses to meet somewhere else we'll do everything within our ability to accommodate that desire.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: What's the wishes of the Board. Do you want to take a five minute break so we can get together.....

MR. C. BROWER: No, no, no.

(Laughter)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: .....and discuss a location, or the location will be here in Anchorage otherwise.

MR. C. BROWER: Yeah, that's fine.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay, so the Staff are recommending a work session on June 16th with a Board meeting on April 16th.

MR. PELTOLA: Actually, Mr. Chair, towards the end of June, early July for this summer of 2015 to address rural/nonrural issues. We anticipate that that would be a one, possibly two days at the very most, we're looking at probably a one day meeting, a work session.

And then the April 2016 to address wildlife proposals would be a three to four day meeting.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: And remember that's
April 2016, a year from -- and three months from now.

(Pause)

MR. CHRISTIANSON: So moved.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Go ahead, Mr. Christianson.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: No, I said so moved.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay, so the motion of the -- for the clarity of everyone, the motion is to have a work session toward the end of June to discuss rural issues or rural/nonrural issues and then schedule a Board meeting of April 2016 to address wildlife proposals.

There's a potential of needing a January meeting.

So I'm going to take a recess for five minutes while the Staff gets the information for us.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: We have a game plan and I'll ask Gene to explain what the options are for the Board for our work session and the next few meetings.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Mr. Chair -- through the Chair. I did make a motion and I did not receive a second so maybe I'll clarify the motion. I did speak with Gene there to get an established timeline.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Okay, maybe it'd be easier for me to declare that -- since there was no second to your motion, your motion died.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: That'll be fine.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: So the floor is open for another motion.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Okay. I will make another motion to schedule the next meeting, June/July of 2015 to do a work session, rural/nonrural and ETJ; January 16 FRMP; and in April '16 a wildlife proposal meeting to direct Staff to schedule time and place for
those meetings.

MR. HARD: Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: You heard the motion and the second, any discussions or questions.

MR. C. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Question's been called for, all those in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Motion passes. We have a request for the Board before we adjourn, or after we adjourn to have a picture taken with the students and I think we'll do it in front of that Federal sign over here so is there any other business that needs to be brought up.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Not hearing any the floor is open for adjournment.

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: You heard the motion and.....

MR. CRIBLEY: Second.

MS. PENDLETON: Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: .....seconded by Mr. Cribley -- oh -- all those in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Any opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN TOWARAK: Motion passes.
Thank you very much for all of your patience with the process.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )
 )ss.
STATE OF ALASKA )

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

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DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 31st day of January 2015.

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Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
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